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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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PLANTS AND . . . ARTIFICIAL LIGHT.

AN American correspondent informs us that a very striking advance may be expected immediately in agriculture on the other side of the Atlantic. Scientific farming is increasing to such an extent that, according to our well-informed correspondent, the yield of the average quality of land in the United States stands a fair chance of being doubled, while enterprising men are attacking the most barren places in the assured hope that they will be able to obtain crops from them. These anticipated results are to be attributed to the trouble that has been spent on the education of those engaged in American husbandry. This statement lends a peculiar interest to an article in the April number of the *Monthly Review* by Mr. Leonard Bastin on plant-growing with artificial light. The English farmer stands in a position totally different from that of his contemporary in America. In the latter country the land so far has only been tilled hastily, and farmers have been satisfied with moderate results. Here we have had an elaborate system of cultivation working for centuries, with the result that until some new agency be discovered it is difficult to see how the fruitfulness of the soil can be increased. The question at the moment is whether the new factor has been found in artificial light. There does not seem

to be at present much prospect of applying it to field crops, but the outlook in regard to horticulture is more promising. Mr. Bastin very properly begins his paper with a review of what has already been accomplished. He says with perfect truth that our vegetables are immeasurably more prolific, our fruits more finely flavoured, our flowers more delightful in colour and fragrance than was the case formerly. With the aid of glass-houses we are able to force crops to maturity earlier than would be the case if they were left to Nature. Still more important was the discovery some ten years ago of the process known as retardation, and retardation, as it were, opens the door to the use of artificial light in horticulture. The fundamental fact in regard to it is that in a state of Nature the growth of plants is retarded, without any harmful results, by means of cold. This led the way to the use of artificial frost as a means of keeping back the growth of flowers. They are retained as long as is desirable in refrigerators, and then, by placing them in a suitable atmosphere, it is possible to make them bloom at any period that is desirable. But there are many plants which will not bloom under artificial heat. They require sunlight, and the question is how to find an adequate substitute for this. Investigation of the subject has been carried out largely by means of the spectrum analysis, which has enabled us to form an idea of the composition of sunlight, wherein other elements have been discovered than the seven coloured rays demonstrated by Newton. At present it may be frankly confessed we do not know how to reproduce the rays of the sun artificially. It is under the sun's rays only that the elaboration of chlorophyll, the green matter in the leaf tissue, can take place. Plants are unable to keep alive in the dark for any length of time, and for growth the ordinary daylight is not sufficient; the intensified heat of summer is required. That is obvious to the observer, who can see that during winter vegetable activity ceases to a large extent.

In regard to the experiments the following is a short summary. In 1894 the great French astronomer, M. Flammarion, attempted to discover the effects of the various coloured rays on vegetable life. "A number of small glass-houses were erected, each being glazed with sheets of a different colour, so that specimens inside should only be subjected to those particular rays." The results were very instructive. They showed that blue rays had a great effect in retarding plant growth, and specimens kept in them for a long time fell into a semi-dormant condition. But under red rays an abnormal rate of growth was produced, and the plants grew more rapidly than they would have done in ordinary daylight. With these two colours, blue and red, the most definite results were reached. The reason of the effects produced was plain enough. By exposing a thermometer to red rays it is easy to prove the presence of heat, while in blue rays there is little or no heating power. From these facts the deduction was drawn that if an artificial light is to be of any use it must possess red rays to a marked degree. Yet even here care has to be taken, because too much exposure to red rays had the effect of making the plants grow so quickly that they exhausted their strength. Thus the blue rays must be present to check premature development.

In America a series of experiments of the same nature has been carried out. From them, according to Mr. Bastin, "it has been definitely established that vegetable life subjected to the rays of arc lamps throughout the hours of natural darkness shows signs of accelerated growth." At present they are being conducted at the Cornell University, U.S.A., with acetylene lamps. These show that acetylene has more penetrative power than electric light or gas, and approximates more nearly than the latter do to the nature of sunlight. The account of an experiment given by Mr. Bastin seems to demonstrate this conclusively. "A crop of thirty-seven radishes grown with ordinary daylight during the daytime and under the influence of acetylene rays at night aggregated in weight one hundred and thirty-seven grains. As against this, thirty-eight radishes produced under the natural conditions of alternate light and darkness only weighed sixty-one grains—less than half." The experiments seem to show that the light from acetylene gas is very much in the nature of weak daylight. Radishes have been grown entirely under its influence. The subject has not been overlooked in Great Britain, as in the new experimental station of the Royal Horticultural Society a large section will be devoted to the investigation of this subject. At present we seem to be standing on the edge of a great and important discovery. Probably before the twentieth century has run to a close, it will have the effect of producing a complete revolution in the methods of those who pursue agriculture either for commercial or for private purposes.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Miss Chaplin. Miss Chaplin is the daughter of the Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, a niece of the Duke of Sutherland, and her sister is married to Lord Castlereagh, Lord Londonderry's eldest son.

COUNTRY



NOTES.

ALL the different sections of politicians could unite in congratulating Mr. Asquith on the state of the national Revenue on the occasion of his first appearance as Chancellor of the Exchequer on Budget night. The accounts are accurately described as being excellent. The Revenue exceeded the official estimates by about one million and a-half, while, as a saving of more than that amount was effected in Expenditure, the surplus for the year is in round figures three and a-half millions. This is the more remarkable inasmuch as at one time it was anticipated that there would be a deficit of a million. Mr. Asquith will have no difficulty in disposing of his surplus, but the really important feature of the Revenue returns lies in the indication they give of the return of more prosperous times. "In the light of the actual results of the past year, the prospects seem very hopeful indeed," says a leading paper which has not been of late addicted to taking the most hopeful view of the commercial outlook; but in point of fact this is not the only sign that things are mending. There has been a considerable decrease in the number of unemployed and the number of paupers. Activity is to be noticed in most of the great centres of trade, and we seem to be promised a return of that period when, in the well-remembered words of the late W. E. Gladstone, "prosperity increased by leaps and bounds."

One of the most graceful and gracefully performed actions in the history of diplomacy was that of Lord Grey on Saturday last. The occasion of it was in itself noteworthy. Lord Grey was entertained by the Pilgrims' Society of New York as the Governor-General of Canada, the first time we remember that such an honour has been paid to the King's representative in the Dominion. In the course of the proceedings a very pleasant announcement was made. At Lord Grey's seat of Hawick, in Northumberland, there has long been guarded as one of the choicest treasures of the place a portrait of Benjamin Franklin which was carried away from Franklin's house in Philadelphia in 1777 by an ancestor of the Governor-General of Canada. It is a possession that has long been coveted by the people of the United States, as Franklin ever has remained one of their national heroes. Acting on his own initiative Lord Grey offered, at the dinner in question, to restore to the United States this portrait, which for 130 years had been "the most honoured and the most interesting possession in my English home." He went on to give as his reasons for the action—in the first place, friendliness to the American nation, and, secondly, his recognition of the fact that "there are higher laws than the laws of possession."

Lord Grey's speech was very noteworthy in other respects. As is known in this country, he has won golden opinions from all sorts of people in the Dominion, and with his customary enthusiasm he has become its most ardent champion. He is inspired by the most sanguine belief in its future. "If the nineteenth century belonged to the United States," he said, "the twentieth century belongs to Canada." He also said, with that good-natured frankness at which it is impossible for the most sensitive to take offence, that "the possible annexation of Canada by the United States is scouted by them as an impossibility." The words were heartily cheered by the audience, and, indeed, it would seem that the threat which for so long hung over Canada, viz., that it would in time be engulfed by the United States, has ceased to exist. Indeed, Mr. Choate had previously

said that Canada is likely to become very soon not only a formidable, but a very successful, competitor in the markets of the world, and he gave it as his opinion that in a comparatively short time she would be able to feed the Mother Country without any help from the United States.

Mr. Rider Haggard's suggestion made at the meeting of the Co-operative Small Holdings Association, that the small holders should have telephones in their houses, is delightful if it could be put into practice. There would be no room for dullness in the country any longer, because when the good wife had swept out and tidied her house she could, even in the worst weather, get her favourite gossip on the telephone and discuss the topics of the day as they occur in the rural districts. During the long winter nights the men could amuse themselves by playing chess or draughts over the telephone without any fear of having to face the darkness and the storm afterwards. Nor is this quite such a selfish amusement as it appears, since, as it would be necessary to have the board and men set out before the householder, all those who knew the movements of the game could follow the progress of the play; and this is only the lighter side of Mr. Haggard's suggestion. The substantial merit of it is that the thousand and one transactions in which the small holder must be necessarily engaged can be managed quickly and conveniently over the telephone, to the great saving of time. Moreover, the telephone has generally been found to be a good ventilating pipe for irritation, and no doubt the haggling for terms about butter and cheese, pigs and poultry, would be done much more amicably over the telephone.

This was not the only noteworthy feature of the meeting. Lord Stamford was in the chair, and he referred to the small holders in New Zealand, and avowed that he had not seen anywhere a more beautiful and comforting aspect of democracy than in that colony. Sir Walter Foster contributed a practical suggestion to the meeting. It was that all who are interested in the movement should insist that, as the occasion served, such of the Crown lands as are suitable should be used for the purpose of providing small holdings. Mr. Rider Haggard supported this, and went a little further. He shares the opinion, which was set forth a few weeks ago in these columns, that it would be advantageous both to the Church and to the people if such glebe lands as are suitable could be made into small holdings. If he had added University lands, he would have completed one part of the programme. It is surely obvious that it is safer and better to start upon these lands, where the breaking-up of the land would be done voluntarily and by agreement, rather than that we should take up the strong and, from many points of view, objectionable line of using legislation to make the division of land compulsory.

A SONG.

Music to me

Is the song of the stars of the night,
When clouds and their infinite caves
Give to the calm of the skies the might
Of the sea.

Music to me

Is the sound of the surf on the shore
When the storm-winds whip the waves
Till they rear, and plunge, and roar
To be free.

Music to me

Is the song of the silent snow,
Drifting as men to their graves
Drift to the music of woe,
And of glee.

PETER DERRICK.

Poultry-keepers have reason to rejoice, because, to adopt some of the mixed metaphors used by the morning and evening papers, people who go into training are likely to make the egg "the main plank in their platform." It seems that it is an equivalent of the roast beef of old England, which has made us what we are. In part, the University crews are responsible for this singular outburst of enthusiasm, since they have long discovered that most of the elements of diet for training purposes are to be found in the egg. The public, always eager to know what is good to eat, has at once set up a demand for eggs in the favourite eating-houses, chop-houses, and general lunching-places of the British public. The main thing that concerns the poultry-keeper and the consumer is that the egg, to exercise its full amount of virtue, ought to be new laid, or, if not new laid, to be at least fresh, and fresh, for the purposes of this argument, we define as not more than three days old. Obviously no foreigner can meet the demand for an egg so fresh from the hen as all this comes to, and therefore it is

to be hoped that the poultry-keepers will call upon their charges to make a united and strong effort to supply the wants of the British public.

It is to be hoped that the Eastern Sea Fisheries Board, which we understand to have the ruling voice in the matter, will see its way to accede to the request of the Boston Deep Sea Company to lease to the company a stretch of some fifty acres on the Lincolnshire shore of the Wash, for the establishment of oyster-beds. The proposed site seems to be very free from all danger of infection from sewage, and the company's trawlers already bring in numbers of oysters which have to be wasted because they are not of a size for the market. They thus have the nucleus of the stock ready at hand, and the shore is said to be well suited for the purpose proposed. The company is already engaged successfully in mussel cultivation on the shores of the Wash.

The story of the entomologist and the game preserver, as we might style it, which was told before Mr. Justice Buckley last week, is one that has a good deal of public interest, now that the number of those who take an interest in entomology and other natural history pursuits is so much on the increase. The entomologists were "operating" with treacle and lanterns in a public road leading through a covert. Once, as was admitted, they transgressed the boundary fence and entered the covert. Application was made to the Court for an injunction to restrain them from trespass, and compensation was claimed for damage said to have been done by the alarm caused to the nerves of sitting pheasants. The judge did not consider that any damage had been proved, nor that there were any grounds for granting the injunction asked for. The entomologists, in fact, scored all along the line; but however strong may be our fellow-feeling for those engaged in the fascinating pursuit of moth-hunting, and our reverence for all that is done in the sacred cause of natural science, we must still feel some sympathy with the game preserver and his keeper, for lanterns moving about in the coverts at night are not desirable where there are pheasants, and the case may possibly suggest to the ingenious mind of the poacher that with a butterfly-net and a pot of treacle he can pass himself off as a harmless moth-hunter.

Lord Lytton, in breaking up portions of his historical estate of Knebworth and selling it for the building of small houses, is pursuing a course that must cause a good many some sentimental regret; but at the same time he is practically opening up to the man of small possessions a very beautiful property and giving him the chance of living in one of the most pleasant parts of Hertfordshire within easy reach of work in London. Regarded from this point of view Lord Lytton's action assumes almost a philanthropic aspect, though no doubt it has a good financial basis also—for which it is so much the better.

Some interesting speeches were delivered the other night at the annual meeting of the British Women's Emigration Association. It is an undoubted disadvantage to our colonists that the number of males greatly exceeds that of females, a state of things which carries much evil in its train; but in the old days of emigration it was seldom the woman, or even the husband and father, who was the pioneer. Indeed, that a man had given pledges to fortune was held out to be sufficient reason why he should not emigrate, while the very flower of the young men who had no domestic ties were the ones to push their fortunes beyond the seas. It cannot be too widely known that the Colonies offer a career to women as well as men. In this country there are many thousands of the female sex who find it extremely difficult to make a living amid the competition of the hour. There is plenty of room for them in the Colonies. There is a wholesome and healthy life for such as wish to carve out their own careers, and as great a chance of being happily married as in England, if their inclination should turn that way. The Women's Emigration Association is, in our opinion, a body thoroughly deserving of support.

The sequel to the mining disaster at Courrières reads like the end of a romance. After being buried, and apparently dead, for three or four weeks, a considerable number of those engaged in the pits at the time of the disaster were found to be alive and have been rescued. Naturally they emerged in a most emaciated condition, only one being able to speak, and he was so weak that he was forbidden to do so by the doctors; but revival took place quite naturally, and a recent visitor says he found them still "very quiet but beaming." Some of them are able to get out of bed and move about in their rooms. Naturally enough they form an irresistible attraction for sightseers, and enterprising music hall managers have been trying to engage them for the

purpose of exhibition. We wish it were not so, because it goes against the grain that public shows should be manufactured out of a great disaster; yet the probability is that sooner or later the victims rescued from the Courrières mines will be on view at one or more of the music halls in London. For to hear and to see the heroes of such an adventure is an occupation dear to the heart of the modern Cockney.

The ingenuous writer, who once a month muses without method in the apt pages of "Old Ebony," bewails in his April homily a lack of manners which he asserts to be visible alike in the House of Commons and in the country. Something very like this which he tells us has been said in all ages of the world, but that is no reason why the very definite charge brought against this generation should not be true. Politeness, says our authority, has departed with wisdom, and as an example of the lack of courtesy at St. Stephen's he asserts that even maiden speeches are interrupted by hoots and groans. But is this quite true? We seem to have a hazy recollection of a gentleman named Disraeli who made a maiden speech more hilariously interrupted than has been that of any maiden knight in the present Parliament. However, the House of Commons concerns us less than the country, in which, we are told, "the old-fashioned respect for age and service has long since been forgotten." The one thing worshipped is said to be success, and carrying his argument on, the writer comes to the conclusion that success is purely and simply the result of advertisement. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*

TO AN ASH STICK.

Old and tried friend, so worn, so sturdy still,
How oft we've gone a-wandering together,
Just thou and I, amid the gorse and heather,
On windy moor, and over dale and hill!

I grip thee, and again—the lonely track,
Stretching afar, and all the bare brown heath;
The fading distance, and the dale beneath,
And the good north wind beating at my back.

And there in yon loved Durham go we still,
As oft of old, a-wandering together,
Just thou and I, amid the gorse and heather,
On windy moor and over dale and hill.

LANCELOT RAIMES.

Thomas Carlyle used to hold that the degeneracy of wit in our time was evident from the fact that we had ceased to give nicknames. It is doubtful, however, if the sage was right on this question. At any rate, as far as cab-drivers go, it would seem that they still rejoice in nicknames. How the fact came out was in this way. At an election by the Cab-drivers' Benevolent Association it was found necessary to put up a notice saying that, "As many of the candidates are only known to their fellow-drivers by their nicknames, these are added for identification in voting." The nicknames are simply delightful. Henry Cooper Meeking is distinguished as "The Policeman," probably because for twelve years he was the attendant at a cabman's shelter. Elijah Nethercliff is known among his fellow-cabmen only as "Old Leather," while Walter James Mayes, who has driven a cab for thirty-five years, is nicknamed "Old Peter of Southampton Row." "Foggy Night-work," "Zoological Bob," "Milky," "Holborn Hill," "Trust in Providence," "Old Teddy of Eyre Arms," "Doctor," "How Do You Know," "Old Darkey Camp," "Tommy the Pigeon-flyer," "East End Joe," and "Carver of Holborn Hill" are other cabmen's nicknames.

It seems but a very short time since week-ending, in the modern sense of that term, was invented. A few years ago comparatively few people thought of making it a regular practice to leave town every Thursday or Friday until Monday; yet so deep a hold has it taken upon our habits that not even the authority of the Prime Minister could restrain the most democratic Parliament England has ever had from endorsing the principle which was first put into practice by Mr. A. J. Balfour. The new Parliamentarian cares little or nothing for a holiday on Wednesday, and he even evinces a Spartan dislike to any regulation that would allow him to linger over his dinner; but from the division that took place on Monday night, it is evident that he is resolved to have his week-ends for himself. And many people will share his opinion in this respect, only we wonder why the railway companies refuse to alter their arrangements. The Friday to Tuesday ticket includes an impossible day, while a Thursday to Monday ticket were invented, there are many thousands who would be tempted to spend their week-ends in the country.

As a rule animals show remarkably little of that prescience with regard to weather changes which it has sometimes been the fashion to attribute to them. The spectacle of birds prematurely nesting and being overtaken in the midst of their domestic business by the most severe weather is a sad one that we have seen very often. But this year it really does look rather as if the small birds must have had some foreknowledge of the cold that was to come at the latter end of March; for in spite of a very mild winter and early spring, even those kinds that are generally the earliest nesters did not show the disposition to begin operations which we should have expected in the circumstances, and very few eggs were laid, according to the observation of the present writer and of others with whom he is in communication, before the cold "snap" came. Of course, when that rather cruel time did arrive it put a quick stop to the thoughts of nesting work so long as it lasted.

In spite of the continued wet at the time when the ewes were lambing, the lambs this year did very well over a great part of the Southern Counties, but it is to be feared that very many must have perished in the severe snow-storms towards the end of March. That this was the case in the more exposed parts of the West Country, such as the Dartmoor and Exmoor districts, we know only too well, and probably the tale of losses is only a little shorter in places where shelter is not so far to seek. Nevertheless, we have reason for thankfulness that the snow did not come in mid-winter, for so heavy a fall at that season, when

the nights were long and the sun without power, probably would have meant that it would lie for many weeks.

A Reuter telegram has announced that at a recent banquet given in New York by the Maritime Association, Mr. Moore, the chief of the Weather Bureau, announced that the bureau believed it had found a basis on which it would be possible to predict the general character of the weather a month in advance. This is weather wisdom on the Continental scale. In our own little insular way we should be grateful enough for a forecast on which we could place a fair amount of reliance only a day in advance. It is for that that we hope. It is to be understood, however, that the insular position creates a peculiar difficulty in this regard. We are sometimes told by meteorologists that the weather which the prevailing westerly winds should bring us from America is broken up off the banks of Newfoundland, and reconstructed again to the eastward of these banks before being conveyed on to us. There seems some little hope that by Marconigram the character of the weather in this quarter of the ocean, where it is manufactured for us, may be announced in advance, so that we shall have better ground for forecast than before. At the same time, it has been conjectured that all the electricity projected into the air by the Marconi apparatus themselves may have a positive effect on the weather; so that on the whole it is difficult to know "where we are" nearly as approximately as the American Weather Bureau expects to know it shortly.

THE SHEPHERD.

AMONG the country labouring classes, it is generally admitted that the two who are the most intelligent are the game-keeper

and the shepherd. The reason is not far to seek. In one of his essays, Hugh Miller made some curious reflections on the effect that occupation had on the human mind. Some callings tend by their very nature to cramp the growth of intelligence. If, to take an extreme case, a man be obliged to spend the whole of his working time in tending a machine, it is obvious that the character of his employment will tend to make him mechanical in his own habits. Again, to take an instance referred to by Miller, a village tailor—he remembered he was speaking of a state of things that existed more than half a century ago, when the tailor did not work in a shop, but went to the houses of his customers—is likely to learn to be talkative and fond of gossip. The work of the old-fashioned tailor was light; he plied his needle or used his goose on the

kitchen table, and was glad to find or invent any topic of conversation with the womenkind that would help to pass the time.

At the other extreme we may take the road-mender, who, leading a life that is for the most part solitary, is induced to ponder things in his mind, so that very often one is surprised by the originality of a man like this; but of all occupations, that of the shepherd is probably most endeared to the public mind. It has to be recollected that our religion came from a pastoral country, and that the book which remains the one of highest authority in this country is full of metaphors and sayings derived from the life of keepers of sheep. It was as the Good Shepherd that the founder of Christianity came to be most widely known, and the emblem of his lieutenant, the bishop, is still the crook, while in a celebrated essay Mr. Ruskin has explained that a bishop is the overseer of the flock. All this has enriched the occupation with a wealth of pleasant association that



W. Reid.

A SCOTCH HERD.

Copyright.

makes the very sound of the name welcome to our ears, and the more we know of the shepherd the more likely are we to feel the actuality of this charm. He is bound to lead a life that is for the most part spent in the open air and in solitude. It is of consequence to him to know the approach of different kinds of weather, and therefore it is almost certain that if he is competent for his task he is a most careful and sound observer of natural phenomena. Nor does he confine

himself to his immediate surroundings. On an inland hill grazing we have known a shepherd, who saw the sea only a few times in his life, keep a piece of seaweed to let him know of the advent of rain. When the atmosphere was dry it shrivelled up, and when moisture was in the air it swelled. But that was an exceptional case. The shepherd's usual study as far as weather-lore goes is directed to the winds and clouds and the movements of birds and animals. Not that he is altogether conscious of this. He goes very much by experience, and when he says it will rain or it will be fine weather, he very often has no direct evidence to go upon, but is simply in his sub-consciousness drawing conclusions from a number of symptoms. Further, he is not tied down to hours and mealtimes. As a rule he has independent charge of his flock, and, though he may make the round of his fields with a fair amount of regularity, yet he is liable to be delayed at any moment. Sheep are liable to many mishaps, and require the closest and most constant attention. They are subject to afflictions, some of which he can remedy quite simply. Others, on the other hand, require exceptional care, or have to be reported at headquarters; and there is no end to the accidents that may



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ON A DORSET MEAD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

happen to sheep. If fat it may get on its back and be unable to rise. If in full fleece it may be caught among the briars and thorns and be unable to extricate itself. If there is a hole or quarry, it has in its stupid moments a tendency to fall into it. Success in shepherding is something that cannot be taught. It depends on giving close attention daily to the members of the flock. A stranger sometimes is surprised to know that an apparently

uniform flock of, say, pedigree Hampshires or Suffolks is, nevertheless, made up of individual sheep, each of which is known to the shepherd by a mark, and such knowledge is really



W. Reid A SHEPHERD'S TENDER CARE.

Copyright.



A. H. Blake.

"STRAYED."

Copyright.

requisite to one who would be considered expert in his calling, and it is not very surprising when one comes to think of it. Only to the unobservant do animals of the same species appear to be alike. As a matter of fact, even the common wild birds, such as thrushes and blackbirds, though they are generally credited with being uniform in their markings, differ most surprisingly when one comes to look at them closely. They vary in size and shape, in the length of leg, in the brightness of their plumage; in one word, in as many ways as do a crowd of men. It is even more so with sheep. There are not two of them exactly alike, and the man whose business it has been to look after them from the moment when they came into the world to the days of their maturity, if his heart be at all in his calling, comes to know them as well as the individuals in a crowd are differentiated by a human observer. Again, the business of the shepherd is one highly calculated to develop all that is tender and gentle in his temperament. For his business is the exact opposite to that, for instance, of the butcher. It would scarcely be fair to expect much sympathy or consideration for animals



Copyright.

SO FAR DOING WELL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

from the man whose chief task in life is to kill them, and who appreciates them only for their selling qualities; but the business of the shepherd is to keep the creatures in life, and on many farms it is customary for his wages, or at least some addition to the usual sum earned by him, to depend on his success in this. We do not know that the mercenary motive counts for so very much. Occupation itself is sufficient to draw out of a man all that is in him of kindness and consideration. During lambing-time it is usual on many farms for the shepherd to take up his residence in the midst of the fold, having for lodging a little wooden hut. Many times during the course of the night he must go out with his lantern and see how his charges are doing, and his solicitude for their welfare is almost maternal in its character. Should one of the lambs come into the world weak and ailing, he has to be its physician as well as its nurse, and no mother could handle her child more gently than the shepherd on such occasions does the new-born lamb. From the day of its birth until its maturity he is its guard and protector, often having no other assistant than the faithful

dog, who so often seems to catch a gleam of his master's intelligence. Sheep are not very clever animals, yet they have sense enough to know their shepherd, and understand, too, that the sheepdog is their friend.

No doubt it involves more anxiety than falls to the lot of the ordinary day labourer. In hilly districts it very often means danger as well, since the shepherd must be prepared to go out in the worst storm, because then his flock are most subject to danger. His life, too, is very often a lonely one. On many farms the shepherd's cottage stands at a considerable distance from the others, in order that he may be as near the pastures as possible. This is bad enough at any time of the year, but during winter the extreme solitude must be oppressive. We know of shepherds' houses that are only approached by a path that would be more accurately described as a rut than as a road, and along which no vehicle passes for months at a time. The little marketing is done at a small town seven or eight miles away, and for four or five months of the year the shepherd and his family are isolated from all the rest



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A DUSTY DAY ALONG THE ROAD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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FORESEEING THE COMING STORM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of the world. Yet they do not understand what is meant when you sympathise with them over feeling dull. The winter days fly away all too quickly, and even the long nights are far from being wearisome. Of course the hours that are kept would be esteemed ridiculous in town, since the shepherd, even in the long days of summer, is accustomed to retire to bed between eight and nine, the reason being that he has to be up with the sun in the morning. In winter people so situated forty or fifty years ago used to retire to bed early in the evening, because in those days light and fuel were luxuries on which it was necessary to economise. Even in the hamlets there was perhaps one labourer's cottage at which a few of the gossips would assemble to talk over the doings of the neighbourhood in the flickering light of a wood fire; but the shepherd enjoys very little in the way of gossip. He has to find occupation for himself during the long evenings. What buoys him up under these circumstances is that the method of payment generally adopted makes it possible for him to make a step upward; in other words, no labourer is so likely to become a tenant on his own account as the shepherd, and we could point to many farming families which trace back to this origin.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

BAD WEATHER AND THE BIRDS.

THE extraordinary weather of the latter part of March, following the almost summer-like mildness of the first ten days of the month, offered, at least, unusual opportunities for noticing the effect of climatic changes on Nature. Vegetation, which had been

hurry-
ing
forward up to March
9th or 10th, did little
else but mark time for
the next three weeks.
The Crown Imperials
in the garden, which
had been adding to
their stature at the
rate of 2 in. or 3 in. a
day, had all that they
could do in the few
hours of occasional
sunshine that came (as
General Buller would
say), "spatchcocked"
in between snow-
storms, to straighten
themselves out from
where they hung flop-
ping and sodden after
the night's frost with-
out thinking of grow-
ing any more. The
ribes, which was
already showing pink,
and promised to be
in full bloom by the

mid-month, still hung, hardly any more pink and visibly discouraged, two weeks later. In the open ground where the full force of the storms was felt, even the daffodils kept their long buds tight-furled through nearly three weeks of alternating snow and sleet and bitter northerly winds.

HOW "COCKS' NESTS" ARE MADE.

On the birds the effect of the weather was even more noticeable, and I am inclined to think that closer observation will show that minor changes in the wind and weather have more to do than is commonly supposed with many of the "mysteries" of bird-life. This year, at least, I feel positive that the weather was responsible for a large number of what are known as "cocks' nests"—that is to say, that the sudden change made many nests remain as futile "cocks' nests" which, under more favourable conditions, would have been duly finished and developed into happy nurseries. During those early days of sunshine, in one small area of shrubbery, three pairs of birds were hard at work nest-building—a pair of blackbirds, one pair of thrushes, and one of robins. The blackbirds' nest was, so far as human eye could see, just finished; the thrushes' yet needed its mud lining, and had one weak spot in the wall; while the robins had done little more than lay the foundations, and were just beginning the interesting and cosy part of the work. Then the storm smote us, and each one of those three nests remains to-day a forlorn, deserted "cock's nest."

SIX DISAPPOINTED BUILDERS.

The blackbirds' and the thrushes' nests were both so placed that the north-east wind could reach them, and after the heavy snowfall of March 12th both were filled to the brim with snow. The robins, with their half-built house well sheltered with ivy leaves, fared somewhat better; but not one of the three pairs did one stroke of work on their nest's after that first disastrous day. Possibly the birds found that all their time was needed to find food to keep themselves alive, and while they had to work so hard for a mere living they could not afford to marry. Perhaps it was just discouragement, with which it is easy to sympathise, for anything more disheartening than to find one's

cosy nest, which one
was building with such
enthusiastic pleasure,
turned in the course of
a few hours into a mere
sodden receptacle for
cold wet snow can
hardly be imagined.
More probably it was
unthinking instinct.
The instinct which
had set them all to
thoughts of house-
keeping and summer
joys while the sun
shone, turned them
back to the old way
of winter when the
weather changed. At
all events, each one
of those six birds
lost immediately every
shred of interest in
house-keeping, and
three forlorn "cock's
nests" remain to
testify to the thought-
lessness of the
weather.



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COLD WEATHER FOR MARCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

A CASABIANCA BIRD.

Yet not entirely all the six, for one of the thrushes still clings to the ruined home. It is the hen bird, and she is "sitting"—sitting on nothing, in a wreck of a nest with no lining and a hole big enough to put her head through in one side. At almost any hour of the day she may be found there. Whether she has any notion that she is keeping the hail and snow out of the desolated home, or whether it is that she knows that by this time she ought, if all had gone well, to be sitting in earnest on a full clutch of eggs, it is impossible to guess. But she looks very foolish and very pathetic as she sits there through the storms. And it is worth noticing that this is a habit which has often been remarked—especially in the case of wrens—in connection with "cocks' nests"; the birds often continue to use them as a sort of day roosting-place when all likelihood of their being developed into proper homes has vanished. Next to wrens the most inveterate builders of "cocks' nests" are certain of the ground-building birds. If we suppose that it is only the accident of unseasonable weather that causes these abortive homes to be deserted (and not any habit or instinct on the part of the birds which starts them building nests which are never intended to be used as homes), it is evident why those built on the ground would be the most likely to suffer frequently, and most likely to be deserted.

THE PRUDENT WREN.

Why wrens' nests should suffer it is less easy to explain; but it is curious that of all small birds the wren is, perhaps, the most sensitive of all on the subject of interference with its nest. Almost every boy learns that he can take considerable liberties with nearly every kind of nest except a wren's, which a finger-touch at the front door, or the moving aside of an overhanging leaf, though it be some inches away, often suffices to make the birds desert even after they have eggs. It may be that it takes similarly less climatic provocation to make a wren throw up his plans for the spring than is the case with most birds. It may be that wrens, from the position in which their nests are built, are more subject to the depredations of certain animals which can travel up and down tree trunks (as squirrels and rats) than are those birds which build in bushes or other places where it is more difficult for those animals to reach. A squirrel or a rat which came to a nest once would probably come again; so wrens learned that when their nests had been interfered with in the slightest way, it was best for them to leave. This instinct once developed would easily extend itself so as to include unusual sensitiveness to interference even on the part of the weather.

INSTINCT, OR ONLY THE WEATHER?

All this is, of course, only a suggestion. The generally accepted belief is that an unmated bird begins to feel premature promptings to go to house-keeping, and sets to building "practice nests," or "trial nests," or "cocks' nests" as they are variously called, merely in obedience to those promptings, and without any possibility that the tentative efforts can result in anything like a home. In support of this is the evidence of birds in captivity; but it is not altogether safe to argue from the habits of birds in captivity to the habits of birds at large. The abnormal condition of life in captivity sets birds off their mating, just as it may set them off their natural food; and the ways of mating birds in confinement are arbitrary and capricious often to a ridiculous degree—a degree which it is impossible to suppose can ever prevail amid their natural surroundings. It may be that in the matter of these trial nests we have argued too much from the analogy of cage-kept birds. We are all of us continually bewildered by the way in which birds of all kinds will, even when they have eggs, desert their nests at times without

any visible excuse. We know, also, that they desert much more readily when a nest is not fully completed and serious business has not begun. I feel positive that this year there are at least three "cocks' nests" within 30ft. of each other, which are "cocks' nests" only because the weather turned to untimely inclemency. How far does the same cause operate to create all the abortive nests which are so common in hedge and thicket, and even more common against the trunks and on the ground?

ROOK-SHOOTING DEFERRED.

In the same way the effect of the weather on the rooks was even more noticeable. Usually nest-building is in full swing in the rookery by the end of the first week or the beginning of the second week in March, and the first nests are completed by anything from the 12th to the 20th of the month. This year not a stroke of work in the way of new building had been done (in this particular rookery) up to within four days of the end of the month. The birds had come back in the warm weather to pull the old nests to pieces, and it was evident that they were on the point of resuming occupation of the rookery in earnest, and turning their attention to the serious business of the spring. On the return of cold weather they lost interest in the rookery, it seemed, altogether. For three weeks they hardly visited it. Occasionally, as they swept by on the bitter wind, they would stop to pay a perfunctory call; but for the most part there was nothing to show that they took any more interest in that particular clump of trees than in any other in the neighbourhood. As with the blackbirds, the thrushes, and the robins, the return of winter seems to have frozen their nest-building inclination. When once the rooks started work again, however, they progressed with amazing rapidity. On the morning of March 27th there was nothing worth calling a nest to be seen in the rookery. By the afternoon of the 30th there were twenty-eight nests which, from the ground, looked complete. If the same thing has happened in other parts of the country, rook-shooting will be two weeks later this year than last.

H. P. R.

HARROWING.

It may appear to be something almost like a mockery to publish pictures of harrowing just now, because for the last few weeks the farmer has been like the proverbial frog under this implement; he has seen the days of spring slipping away, each bringing with it such tempests of wind and snow, sleet and rain, as rendered the sowing of seed well-nigh impossible. Boisterous as is the reputation of March, the mother of months, very few people in the country remember a March so extraordinary as that which has closed. A proverb says that if it comes in like a lion it will go out like a lamb; but it came in like a lion, and raged like that animal throughout the whole of its duration; so that Lady Day, when we expect to find something of the balm of spring in the air, bore a very decided resemblance to what is called a good old-fashioned Christmas. As far as frost, wind, and snow were concerned, the likeness was perfect. As a consequence, the sowing of seed, and even the work of the harrow, have been very much delayed this year, though the ultimate crops need not necessarily suffer on that account. Our illustrations of harrowing, as will be seen, are chosen more for their



W. Reid.

"BY THE BONNIE BONNIE BANKS OF LOCH LOMOND."

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pictorial value than for any agricultural teaching. If the development of this implement were to be illustrated, what would be required would be diagrams showing the various kinds of harrow used. In itself the harrow is not a very picturesque implement. In all probability its invention followed that of the plough, and yet that is not absolutely certain. In pastoral countries it is not uncommon to see farmers to-day using the most primitive harrow imaginable. It is made of thorn bushes, usually the cuttings from some

over-grown hedge that has had to be slashed. We have never seen this employed on arable ground, but the grazier finds it an advantage to run it over the meadows, so as to clean and freshen up the grass just after the new blades are beginning to come. We can scarcely imagine that the early pastoral peoples who were vagrant in their disposition would trouble to do this, as, when one pasture failed, their habit was to seek another. But when the only plough in existence was a crooked stick, which has served as model for all subsequent ploughs—or, at least, of horse ploughs—it is possible that a branch of thorns acted as substitute for a harrow. After the ground had been ploughed roughly, as it must have been in primitive times, the sower went forth to sow, casting his grain adroitly and evenly on the surface. The next business was to cover it, and here his branch of thorn would act as a piece of labour-saving machinery. In process of time, however, a more extended use was found for the harrow. In fact, it had two functions

to fulfil. One was to pulverise the clods left by the plough, and the other was to earth over the grain. In the former capacity it acted somewhat in the manner of a roller. One does not need to be very old to remember this process at work. Usually one of the first tasks set a lad who was beginning his work on the farm was that of driving a roller or a harrow. Naturally he preferred the former, for the simple reason that, the roller being attached to a framework, he was able to find a seat on it, and

could do his work comfortably, whereas it was just as necessary to walk behind the harrow as behind the plough, and this proved tiring work in the long cold days of spring. The unimproved harrow of those days was a frame of wood containing a number of straight teeth. It was usually smaller than those of to-day, and was drawn by a single horse. In this way it broke up the lumps of earth and raked the land and smoothed it. The first step towards improving this contrivance was to substitute light steel bars for the wooden frame, and to construct the harrow in sections, secured to a draught bar by flexible connections. This was a considerable advance, as it enabled the harrow to adapt itself to immovable obstacles and other inconveniences of the ground, as obviously a section could be made to turn aside much more easily than a large harrow. Again, it ceased to be drawn by one horse, except on the lightest land. A glance at our illustrations will show a great variation in the horsing of the harrow, which is the more interesting because the pictures have



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FORERUNNERS OF SOWING.

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COVERING IN THE SEED.

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CRUMBLING DOWN THE BIG CLODS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

really been collected from very different parts of the kingdom—Scotland, Suffolk, and Ireland. In the first, which gives us a very typical March scene, with the bare trees that still seem to have a suggestion of spring, a pair of horses are used, while three are yoked to the next one. Needless to say, the number of horses is dependent more on the character of the ground than on anything else. Another improvement soon introduced lay in the arrangement of the teeth. The elder farmer was accustomed to have them quite straight and immovable, and a long time passed before anyone had dreamed of changing these, but ultimately it was discovered that great advantage might be gained by having the teeth adjustable to any angle, so that

by moving a lever the harrow could be changed from a pulveriser to a smoothing harrow. After that came the spring tooth harrow, and the comfort of those who used this implement was consulted by giving it a seat like that on a reaping machine. The disk harrow was a still later invention, but a description of it would scarcely be very lucid without the aid of diagrams. Closely connected with the history of the harrow is that of the other implement used for pulverising, viz., the roller. What was the very oldest form of this we do not know for certain, but in all probability it was a large round stone through which a hole was bored, so that when dragged along, either by man or horse, it could revolve. We have seen home-made implements



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CLEANING THE FALLOWS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of this kind still in use, and, indeed, there are many forms of it, the conservative tenants still adhering to a form of stone roller. Ultimately, however, it gave way to the iron roller, the latest form of which is one consisting of a set of skeleton rollers carried on a shaft and revolving freely in such a manner that the longitudinal bars break up all lumps as the roller passes over them. There have been Marches in the past when the proceedings of a man engaged in



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FEEDING THE SOWER.

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this work have been hidden in a cloud of dust, but unluckily that is very far from being the case this year. On the contrary, most of the land is still so sodden with water—and particularly does this apply to clay land—that the application of a roller or a harrow to it would only result in making bad worse. However, the winds at this time of the year have a very drying quality, and it would only require a few days of fine weather to produce a tilth in which it would be a delight to sow.

THE TRANSPLANTING OF A DAISY.

By M. E. FRANCIS.

MRS. MONSON was busy in her garden when Izzy Knott came up the path. It was a very tiny garden, but Mrs. Monson tended it with as much love and assiduity as she had lavished on the Rectory garden, which for so many years had been her chief delight. Two incumbents had been successively in possession of the living since those days, and a third was now reigning, but little Mrs. Monson remained apparently the same, tending her minute patch of ground, teaching her class every Sunday, and transforming one village girl after another into very efficient little maids. Efficient, at least, they were in her eyes; they all wore their hair very smooth, and polished their faces very clean, and bobbed little curtsies whenever anyone spoke to them, and knocked at every door before venturing to enter. Mrs. Monson would no more have tolerated a speck of dust on her threadbare carpet than she would have endured a dead leaf on the few square yards of turf which she dignified with the title of lawn; her pupils were, moreover, instructed to take plenty of time in washing-up tea-things and polishing knives, to investigate every corner of passage and stairway every single day, and to perform, in fact, a variety of duties with as much thoroughness as decorum.

Izzy was the best girl of them all, Mrs. Monson frequently averred, and having arrived at the mature age of seventeen, and being anxious, to quote from Mrs. Monson's phraseology, "to improve herself," she had sought that kind old lady's help in obtaining a situation. Mrs. Monson determined to look further afield on behalf of this particular *protégée* than she had done on similar occasions.

"Izzy is too good to be thrown away on village people," she remarked. And Izzy had obtained a very grand situation indeed. She was going all the way to Windsor to be under-housemaid to a certain Lady Catherine Langley, whose husband was an officer in the Guards; and on this particular day, being about to take her departure in the carrier's cart, which was to convey her to the five-mile distant railway station, she had come to say farewell to her patroness.

Mrs. Monson dropped her garden scissors into her flat basket and trotted down the path to meet her, pausing on the way to press back into place a small pebble which had detached itself from its gravelled surface. Izzy bobbed her curtsy, but the old lady, leaning forward, took possession of the broad hand in its cotton glove.

"God bless you, my dear child," she said, with a little quaver in her voice.

"Thank you, m'm," said Izzy, curtsying again, while the corners of her mouth went first up and then down, and her round eyes blinked for a moment.

Izzy's eyes were very round, and of an indeterminate bluish grey; her cheeks were round, too, and red; her dark hair was only just long enough to form a very small, very compact little knob low down on her neck. She was not tall, but she was broad, and looked strong; her customary gait was a kind of trot, designed, no doubt, to serve as counterpoise to the

protracted time which she devoted to the accomplishment of her household tasks.

"You are a very lucky girl, you know," said Mrs. Monson, releasing her hand.

"E-es'm," returned Izzy, and the corners of her mouth went up again; indeed, that honest, good-humoured face of hers was seldom without a smile.

"You'll remember all I told you," said Mrs. Monson, proceeding to recapitulate certain pieces of advice relating to matters spiritual and temporal, to all of which Izzy duly responded, "E-es'm," with an air of profound attention.

"You mu-t'n't say 'E-es' any more, you know," said the old lady, holding up an admonitory finger; "and when you are speaking to Lady Catherine Langley, you must say 'my lady,' or 'your ladyship.'"

"E-es'm," responded Izzy, and then correcting herself quickly, "yes, my lady."

Mrs. Monson laughed softly and rubbed her hands.

"I think you will do very well," she said; "I shall be much disappointed if you do not get on very well. Now good-bye, my child, and God bless you. I think I see the carrier's cart coming now. Your mother will want a few words with you before you go."

"Mother be a-goin' with I so far as the station, please'm," said Izzy. "But I must just run home-along an' say good-bye to granny; there's a lot o' folks do want to see I off. Maggie Frisby, she do say she'd like a place in Windsor too. I told her I'd look out for one for her."

"Maggie is too young to think of leaving home yet," answered Mrs. Monson, rather stiffly; "and I'm not quite sure that in her case— You must leave older and wiser heads to settle things like that, Izzy. Now trot away, child, for I don't fancy you have much time."

"No'm, thank ye'm," said Izzy, with a farewell dip.

Then she did trot away, closing the gate very carefully after her, and Mrs. Monson watched the retreating figure until it disappeared down the lane which led to the village.

"She was the best of them all," she said to herself with a little sigh, as she drew her scissors from the basket.

The carrier's cart had already paused before the gate of Izzy's home. Granny herself had hobbled as far as the threshold, and was on the look-out for her. Mother was fastening her cape; Jim and Jack were conveying the well-corded tin box and the green carpet bag, containing her worldly goods, to the cart, the occupants of which were craning their heads with good-humoured curiosity from beneath the antiquated green hood. Maggie Frisby, Chrissie Meatyard, and several more of Izzy's friends had gathered round the vehicle; as its driver remarked with a grin, "The maid was havin' a proper good send-off!"

Izzy's face was all smiles now; she hugged her granny, who clapped her on the back and told her facetiously she'd be that grand an' that set-up she wouldn't speak to them most likely when next she came that way. She kissed her brothers and little sisters, and her friends, half climbed into the cart where her

mother was already installed, jumped down again, ran back into the house to fetch the big posy, which she had forgotten, from the kitchen table, and finally clambered into her place breathless and scarlet.

"Well, now," said the carrier, "be that all? Be ye quite sure? Bain't there nothin' else ye've left behind—not your heart, for instance? I didn't see no young chap come to say good-bye wi' the others!"

"Sh-sh-sh!" said Mrs. Knott, reprovingly; "my maid don't care for sich talk, Mr. Inkpen. She bain't one o' that kind. There, Mrs. Monson she've a-brought her up strict and she did always tell her never to ha' nothin' at all to do wi' menfolk."

"O-ooh," said the carrier, gathering up the reins and glancing quizzically at Izzy. "Well, the maid herself 'ull ha' summat to say to that in a year or two, I d' 'low, but she be young enough to wait."

"And that's true," agreed the other matrons in the cart, and they glanced smilingly at Izzy, who smiled back again and sniffed at her nosegay, and looked complacently from time to time at those squeaky shiny boots which were the joy of her soul.

"The very minute I did set eyes on that maid," said a fat old lady with a market basket precariously poised on her knees, "I says to myself, 'There goes one o' the good old-fayshioned sort.' Anybody can see as she've a-been brought up well and respectable. No fallals and fringes and new-fangled fayshions about her."

"She've a-been trained so, d'ye see," responded Mrs. Knott. "Mrs. Monson, that's her mistress, she did always p'int out as 'twas best to be simple. She wouldn't never allow no flowers nor ribbons what was too bright, nor so much as a frill o' lace. Izzy, there, she've a-got so many good things as a maid mid wish to have, but they be all plain."

Indeed, poor Izzy's attire was simplicity itself. A brown dress reaching just below the ankles, a black jacket, unenlivened even by braid, a brown mushroom hat trimmed with ribbon to match, a linen collar, and the cotton gloves afore-mentioned; nevertheless, with her bright face and her big posy, she presented a picture of a country maid that was far from unpleasing.

During the five-mile drive conversation was kept up with unimpaired vigour; those of the occupants of the cart who knew each other discoursed of intimate matters concerning their neighbours; those who were strangers listened with deep interest, and presently discoursed of matters more or less intimate concerning themselves. Izzy smiled in her corner, and thought of Windsor and the King and Queen and the castle and the park and the forest, and of all the other wonderful things Mrs. Monson had told her she might expect to see. Arrived at the station, her ticket was duly taken and handed over to her with many injunctions by Mrs. Knott, who further presented her with a small purse containing a few shillings; then her box was put into the van and her carpet bag put under the seat of the compartment selected for her, and finally it was time to part.

"Then good-bye, my dear, and God bless 'ee. Take care o' theeself; but I know thee'll do that!" said Mrs. Knott, as the train began to move off.

Izzy drew in her head and waved her handkerchief; her eyes were once more a little dim and her mouth disposed to droop, but after a moment she sat down in her corner with as bright a face as ever, and having counted her money, stowed away her purse in her pocket, and tucked her ticket into her glove, she smiled broadly at her opposite neighbour.

"'Tis best to have your ticket handy; they do ax for it so often, mother said," she remarked.

"So long as it don't get lost," responded the other.

"Oh, I shan't lost it," said Izzy, confidently.

Then everyone else in the carriage laughed a little, and Izzy got rosier than ever and buried her face in her posy.

Grove House, Windsor, was situated conveniently near the barracks, and on a certain mellow June afternoon Sergeant Bunce chanced to pass that way. He smiled sardonically to himself as he observed a little knot of people talking together near the gate which led to the stable entrance; it was a sight to which he was well accustomed, and which never failed to cause him a kind of contemptuous amusement. Red coats and white caps were frequently seen in conjunction in various purlieus of the Royal borough; on this occasion the maidens wore no white caps, but rather hats much befattered and beflowered, and as the sergeant strolled by the group broke up into couples, each pair walking away arm-in-arm.

"The cat's away as usual," said the sergeant, turning to look after them. "The mice are out for a scamper. A lot o' bloomin' fools!"

He was about to saunter on again, when, from behind the gate which still stood ajar, there stepped a little figure—a little countrified figure such as Sergeant Bunce remembered to have seen often enough at home in the old county. It wore a brown hat and a brown dress, and its face was very rosy, and one hand

clutched a bunch of pink horse-chestnut blossoms. The girl came forward a pace or two, and heaved a deep sigh as she, too, looked after the retreating figures; then turning slowly she caught sight of the sergeant.

"Oh!" cried Izzy. Her round eyes opened more widely than ever, she grinned broadly and bashfully, and, extending her hand, slowly opened her fingers. In the middle of the palm lay a particularly bright half-crown.

"Well?" said Sergeant Bunce.

"You see what I've a-got here," remarked Izzy, still bashfully, but with a certain growing confidence.

"I see," said Sergeant Bunce, gruffly. "What's it for?"

"For you, if ye like," said Izzy. "They did tell I up to the house as I'd never get no soldier to walk wi' me wi'out I offered him half-a-crown."

"Oh, they told you that, did they?" said Sergeant Bunce, flicking at his boot with his jaunty little cane. "They're a nice lot up at the house. How long have you been there?"

"Three week come Monday," said Izzy.

"Ah," returned the sergeant; "it's the sort of place I fancy you'd be better away from, my girl."

"They be all kind enough," resumed Izzy, confidentially; "but it's a queer place—the queerest place I was ever in."

Sergeant Bunce smiled grimly as he enquired if she'd been in many places before. "You don't look as if ye had," he added.

"'Tis what they all do say," admitted Izzy, drawing back her hand a little way, and turning over the half-crown with her thumb. "They do say I'm terrible simple. They do laugh at I from mornin' till night. Nay, I've been but in the one place before, and that was down to our own village in Dorset. Mrs. Monson was the lady's name, and she was a very nice lady, whatever they mid say." This rather defiantly.

"So ye be a Dorset maid, be ye?" said the sergeant, with a laugh and a sudden lapse into the familiar dialect. "Well, I'm a Dorset man myself. Shake hands on't."

Izzy hastily transferred her half-crown to the other hand and complied; then, again diffidently holding out the coin, she said, coaxingly, "Won't ye take it then, sir?"

The sergeant smiled as he motioned the girl's hand away from him.

"That's not in my line," he said; then, seeing her face fall, he added, "Are ye so anxious as all that to walk out with one of us that you'll offer your money to the first man ye meet on the chance of it?"

"Only if he looked—agree'ble," said Izzy, with something like a sob. "There, they do all tease I so; they do say no one 'ull ever look at I because my face be so ordin'ry and I be dressed so queer—that's what they do say. I'd just like to show 'em."

"Well, come along, then," said the sergeant, with sudden resolution; "since ye be a Dorset maid and I be a Dorset man I'll give 'ee your way for once. I rather fancy talkin' a bit o' the queer old talk. But ye mustn't look for it again," he added, more severely; "it bain't in my line, I say. Put your money in your pocket, and hang on."

Izzy blissfully obeyed, and the two marched away together, the girl's customary trot keeping pace with the sergeant's stride. "If mother could only see me now," she proudly thought. Well might granny say she'd be too grand for anything when she came back.

"What's your name to begin with?" enquired the man, abruptly. "Mine's Bunce—Harry Bunce. I'm a sergeant, as you can see for yourself."

Izzy's ignorant eyes had not detected the fact, but she was much impressed nevertheless, and wondered within herself what the other folks up to the house would say when she told them.

Bunce appeared to divine her thought. "That's my name, but you've no need to mention it," he said, sharply. "There's no need to talk o' this at all. If I'm lettin' ye have your fancy 'tis along o' my wishin' to speak a bit plain to ye. Now, then, what be your name?"

"Izzy," returned she, blushing. "I mean Izzy-bella—Izzy-bella Knott."

"Oh, that's it," remarked the sergeant. "Well, I'll talk to ye a bit presently, when we do come to a more private place."

Izzy looked up at him half fearfully; his face was very grave and stern. After a moment, however, he began to converse on indifferent topics—the weather, the park, the household of the Grove, the manner of his speech varying from the broad Dorset so familiar to Izzy's ears to the idiomatic English common in the barrack-room, and being occasionally adorned with certain figures and expressions which she did not understand. When they had proceeded a little way they turned up a bye-lane, and then silence fell between them.

"Did nobody ever tell you," enquired Bunce, after a long pause, "that 'tisn't a very safe thing for a maid to get talkin' wi' any stray chap she comes across?"

"Oh, I wouldn't do such a thing," responded Izzy, indignantly. "I'd never ha' nothin' to do wi' stray chaps. 'Tis different wi' a soldier."

"Now look'ee here, my maid," resumed the sergeant, still in an autocratic tone; "I don't know anything about linesmen—they be a rotten lot, but us men in the Guards bain't a bit better nor other folks—we're mostly worse, in fact—at least, we're worse where a woman is concerned. And why? Because only a few of us is such fools as to get married."

Izzy paused, much astonished and a good deal alarmed.

"But nearly all the maids I've met wi' since I come here be a-walkin' out wi' soldiers," she remarked. "And Jane—that's the kitchen-maid—she do say her and her sweetheart be a-goin' to make a match on't very soon."

"Oh, be they?" responded the sergeant, sardonically. "We'll see that! Jackson's her fellow—I've seen 'em walking together."

"E-es, Corporal Jackson," interrupted Izzy.

"Well, do ye know what'll happen?" resumed Bunce. "Maybe Jackson isn't such a fool as he looks, or maybe he is. What'll happen 'ull be this anyhow: He'll up an' ax the colonel's leave to marry, an' the colonel 'ull send for me—same as he always does. An' he'll say, 'Sergeant, take Corporal Jackson round the married quarters—'"

Here the sergeant broke off to laugh derisively. "So I'll take him round, and show him the kiddies tumblin' over each other, and the women wi' their hair tumblin' into their eyes, an' the washtubs, an' everything. An' he'll smell the steam and hear the scoldin' an' the squallin', and see a family o' six, maybe, crowded into two rooms what the poor devils have to pay six shillin' a week for; an' then I'll trot him back, and as like as not he'll tell the colonel he've a-changed his mind—they mostly do."

Izzy suddenly jerked away her hand from his arm.

The sergeant looked down at her in some surprise. "They mostly do," he repeated, triumphantly. "I've took dozens of 'em round, and they mostly change their minds. What d'ye think o' that?"

"I think," said Izzy, vehemently, "I think you be a crool man. Poor Jane, it 'ull jist about break her heart if Mr. Jackson doesn't keep his word to her. You did ought to think o' the maids so much as the men, sir."

"The maids shouldn't run arter the men, then," said the sergeant, grimly. "What's a man to think when even a little daisy of a girl same as you 'ull come runnin' out wi' her half-crown, ready to take up wi' the first blackguard that wears a red coat? I might have been the greatest rascal out for anything you knew."

Izzy turned without a word, and began to walk slowly away; her head was bent, and as she walked she rubbed the back of her hand across her eyes. Sergeant Bunce strode after her, and soon caught her up.

"Now look here, my girl," he said, more kindly than he had yet spoken. "A soldier may be a blackguard, as I say, or he may be a true man, but whichever way it be 'tis safer to let him alone. Take my advice and go home-along to Dorset. The country's the place for you. I know the way they carry on at Grove House, and the sooner you're out of it the better."

Izzy continued to trot on without speaking; her face was averted. After a pause she burst out: "I don't want to walk wi' you no more. I'd be sorry to think there was more like ye in the King's Army. I don't want ye to come arter me no more."

"That's a good 'un," said the sergeant, bursting into a roar of laughter.

He stood still, however, and watched the odd-looking little figure till it disappeared from view.

As may have been surmised from the foregoing incident, Izzy's surroundings at Grove House were hardly those which Mrs. Monson would have chosen for her. Her master and mistress had not long been married, and were both young, gay, and busy. They were seldom at home, and Lady Catherine had far too many engagements, even when there, to have much time to spare for household concerns. She had been amused at Izzy's manners and appearance, and had directed the head-housemaid to look after her and get her into shape if she could. So Izzy's education was immediately taken in hand, and she found to her surprise that she had to begin by unlearning much that Mrs. Monson had taught her. There must be no curtsies, no unnecessary knocks at doors, no waste of time in investigating corners, no voluntary confessions if crockery got broken. She learnt a great many things, too—more things than either she or Mrs. Monson had ever dreamed of in their simple philosophy, things which made her open her eyes very wide, and caused her habitual smile to be frequently replaced by a puzzled expression.

About six weeks after her encounter with Sergeant Bunce, she came upon that gentleman again; she was, indeed, flying out of the back gate when she caught sight of him, and would have darted past him had he not barred her progress.

"So it's you, be it?" enquired he, smiling down at her. "Come, shall us go for a walk and talk a bit o' Dorset talk?"

"No, thank you," said Izzy, stiffly. "I'm—I'm busy just now."

Sergeant Bunce eyed her attentively. The short brown skirt was supplemented by a crimson frill; her bodice was adorned with trimmings of the same hue, and a boat-shaped hat, with an emaciated and not over-clean white feather, was set sideways on her head over a carefully-curled fringe.

"What ha' you been doin' to yourself?" enquired Sergeant Bunce, sternly.

"I've been tryin' to make myself look more like other maids—other gurls, I mean," replied Izzy, with dignity. "I'm gettin' on very well now, an' they've given over laughin' at me. One of 'em lent me this 'at for to-day."

Even in the midst of her dignity, Izzy could not refrain from being confidential.

"I see," said Sergeant Bunce. "Well, ye haven't improved yourself, my dear. Got a sweetheart yet?"

The corners of Izzy's mouth went up and down in the old way, and then her naturally sunny temper carried the day.

"I see'd somebody last night," she said. "Me and Jane run out after supper jist so far as the gate, and Jane met Corporal Jackson, and the corporal had a friend along of en."

"Ha!" said Sergeant Bunce. "Did you offer en half-a-crown?"

"Nay, now, I never knew anybody carry on so as you do carry on about that wold half-crown! No, but we did get a-talkin', an' he did say he mid very well take me out a-walkin' to-day. So Jane and me done up my dress a bit. Ye see 'twas pretty nigh dark when we was out last night, and Jane thought he—the corporal's friend—mid be disappointed like if he see'd I was so ord'nary by daylight."

"What be the chap's name?" asked the sergeant, with his inquisitorial air.

"Oh, we didn't get so far as that," replied Izzy, scandalised. "We did but have a few minutes' talk. He did call I a reg'lar cure," she announced, with a sudden burst of delighted laughter.

"H'm," grunted the sergeant. "Now look here, my maid, you'll be a-gettin' into trouble so sure as anything if ye don't look out. You'd best come for a walk along of I. I d' 'low 'tis the best way o' keepin' ye out o' mischief."

Izzy eyed him with sudden solemnity. He looked very big, and serious, and magnificent. He was a sergeant—not one of them up at the house were on speaking terms with a sergeant—and he was certainly a very fine man. She crossed to the other side, seized hold of his arm with her sturdy hand, and trotted away with him. The sergeant twirled his moustache and flourished his cane; after a moment or two Izzy stole a glance at his face, and saw, to her satisfaction, that he was smiling.

"Where was ye goin' to meet that fellow?" enquired he. Izzy indicated the place.

"Then we'll jist turn about and walk in the other direction."

The conversation was of an entirely amicable nature that day; there were no scoldings and no quarrels. When the pair parted, Bunce shook Izzy by the hand, and informed her he was willing to take her out on the following Sunday, if she'd leave that fly-away hat at home, and promise to have nothing to say during the intermediate time to Jackson's friend, or any other fellow.

"I don't know about that," said Izzy, with a giggle.

"What!" cried he, wheeling round fiercely.

"We'll see," said Izzy, backing towards the house.

"Ye'll have to give me your promise," cried the sergeant.

"Well, then, maybe I will," returned she, much elated.

They did walk out on the following Sunday, and on many subsequent occasions. But, as Izzy was sworn to secrecy by the discreet sergeant, and as they invariably chose unfrequented ways, the identity of her admirer was not discovered. At Grove House all were too busy with their own concerns to trouble themselves much about so insignificant a matter.

One November afternoon Sergeant Bunce so far forgot his habitual caution as to steal a few moments' conversation with Izzy at the gate. There was no one about, the dusk, moreover, afforded a convenient cover, and he had a matter of importance to disclose to her.

"I took Corporal Jackson round this morning," he remarked, after a preliminary greeting of a somewhat warmer nature than Mrs. Monson would perhaps have approved.

"Oh, an' did ye?" cried Izzy, breathlessly. "But ye didn't—?"

"I didn't forget my promise. I took en round, but I didn't go for to put spokes in your friend's wheel. I done the very opposite. Says I when we come across a dirty-faced little brat 'Nice little kid,' says I. So Jackson stops an' looks at it. 'Oh, he says, 'I s'pose so.'"

A faint echo of the sergeant's former sardonic laugh was audible in the darkness, succeeded by a long-drawn sigh of gratitude from Izzy.

"I do take it real kind of ye! There, poor Jane, she be a-countin' the days!"

"Yes," went on Bunce, "and when I did see a 'ooman elbow-deep in suds, 'Fine stirrin' body that,' I'd say. 'That's Mrs. Spragg. I d' 'low Spragg's in luck.' Jackson, he'd look

at me——" Here the sergeant laughed again. "'Well, if you say so, Sergeant Bunce,' he'd say, 'your views bein' so well known, I s'pose he is.' I made a right-down good job of Jackson," he summed up, "a right-down good job. What'll ye give me for that?"

While Izzy was giggling, and the sergeant gallantly protesting that he'd earned summat and meant to be paid, a quick step was heard on the path behind them, and the light of a small electric torch was suddenly flashed upon them.

"Sergeant Bunce!" exclaimed Captain Langley in astonishment. "Well, if it had been any other man in the regiment——"

Izzy scuttled back to the house in great anguish and terror, but Sergeant Bunce stood his ground.

"What is the meaning of this?" enquired Captain Langley, sternly. "I've known long enough that there's been a confounded deal too much philandering among the maids here, but that you should take part in it—you!"

Sergeant Bunce cleared his throat and saluted.

"Me and that girl are neighbours at home, sir," he remarked. "At least, we both come from the same county—both Dorset born, sir."

"Indeed?" said Captain Langley.

"Yes, sir. She's a reg'lar country girl, altogether simple; when she first come she was ready to take up with any black-guard that come in her way."

"I see," said the other.

"Yes, sir. This bein' the case, I've been tryin' to look after her a bit."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Captain Langley. "I'm afraid that won't wash, Sergeant."

Sergeant Bunce drew himself up very stiff, and went on in precisely the same tone: "And there's another thing, too, sir; she's my fancy."

"Your what? Do you mean to say you have the cheek to tell me that you and one of my own servants——"

"I'm going to make her Mrs. Bunce, sir," replied the sergeant, succinctly. "At least, I intend to ask the colonel's leave——"

"Times are changed, Sergeant. Don't you think before you make up your mind you had better take a little stroll round the married quarters?"

Captain Langley laughed as he spoke, the sergeant's previous perambulations in the locality mentioned having ever been a standing jest among his superior officers.

Sergeant Bunce saluted again: "I've been round this morning, sir, with Corporal Jackson."

"Jackson! What—another good man gone wrong?"

"No, sir. He's going to stick to his girl."

"Oh, is he? Times are changed indeed."

"Yes, sir, and with your leave I'll stick to mine."

Captain Langley laughed again, pocketed his torch, and strolled towards the house. Sergeant Bunce closed the gate and rested his arms on the top of it, glancing towards a certain twinkling light in an upper window.

"'Tis a bit sudden," he said to himself, "a bit sudden. But there, I d' 'low 'twas to be. I'll tell the little maid to-morrow."

WITH HOOK AND LINE.



W. Thomas.

GETTING BAIT READY.

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OF all the methods of catching sea fish for our markets, longlining is, for obvious

reasons, the most interesting from the spectacular point of view, for it combines the variety of catch associated with the incoming of the trawl with the prolonged excitement more proper to the hauling of the drift-net. The trawl gives abundance of flat fish and round, of dark fish and silvery; but its interest is, from the on-looker's point of view, confined to the moment at which the great purse of sea-food swings clear over the trawler's deck, and its contents are released in a struggling, slippery mass to be sorted according to size and quality, and with, perhaps, some few unmarketable treasures for the naturalist accompanying the cruise. The drift-net spreads the excitement over the hour or more that it may take in the hauling; but its harvest lacks variety, being practically confined to a single species, mackerel, herring, or pilchard, according to season and locality, so that when the landsman has seen 100 of these fish hauled from the dancing sea and shaken out on deck, he has for all practical purposes seen 10,000, and the only variety takes the shape of a writhing shark or dogfish, which is anything but a welcome apparition in its maze of delicate netting.

Hook-and-line fishing of any kind, again, nearer approaches the sporting manner of catching fishes, and for this reason also it is preferred by those to whom the reaping of the sea's

harvest is pastime and not grim earnest. The method of catching fish on the hook for wholesale purposes takes three forms: plummeting at the surface, only for mackerel; handline-fishing, in which each man has a line fitted with a heavy lead and a sprawl of wire carrying two or more hooks; and longlining. The manner of fishing with handlines is much the same as that adopted by amateurs, the hooks being baited with whelk or mussel or lug-worm, then the whole being lowered until the lead bumps against the bottom, after which a fathom or two of line may be hauled in again, so that the baits may hang clear of the ground. Where a very strong tide is running (as off Whitby, the Eddystone, and many other spots within the ten-mile limit), the fishermen are seen continually to readjust the length of line out, else lead and hooks might be carried too far off the bottom to be among the fish. The fish chiefly caught by this handlining are cod, haddock, whiting, and different kinds of flat fish.

The longline works on another principle. In using it, the fisherman does not "strike" when each fish bites, but leaves the line to fish by itself, and pulls it up again when it has been down long enough on the fishing-grounds. This period varies

fingers, and such inedible furniture of the marine aquarium occupy quite a large proportion of the hooks, after which come a shining array of whiting, curiously enough in little batches and with many gaps. Now and then, when an extra strain tells of a good turbot or conger, there is a cry of "Something on the Line!" and it is then somebody's business to stand by with the gaff. More than once it is a grand John Dory, bristling like a silver-plated boar, which has not, indeed, taken the small bait, but has swallowed a previously-hooked whiting. Quite 100 of the whiting are jerked off the hooks as they leave the water. Our French friends, more thrifty than the men of Kent, recover all of these in a great, long-handled landing-net, held under the stern for the purpose, but the Folkestone hookers dispense with such economies, though a half-hearted lunge is often made at these truants with a strange gaff of many hooks, but rarely with success. Still, it is what their grandfathers used, and therefore preferable to the Frenchman's net. The work of hauling takes a couple of hours, and all the crew, save the "old man" at the helm, will be hard at it on the homeward tack, clearing the line and rearranging those 4,000 hooks in the tubs



W. Thomas.

"JILLING" AROUND.

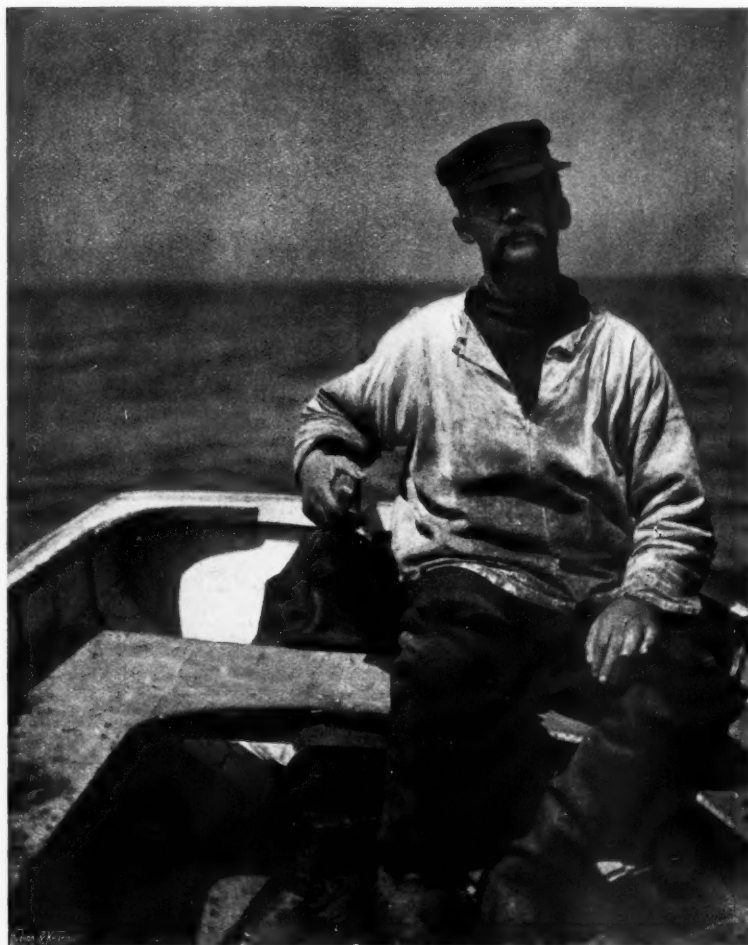
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according to local custom. On some parts of the coast, such a line, which may be three miles long, carrying 3,000, or more, hooks, is "shot" just before sunset, and taken up again just after next morning's dawn. This practice has the drawback of leaving the hooked fish exposed to sharks and dogfish. A case in point came under my notice during the present spring, when such a longline was hauled at Mevagissey, and it was found that out of, I think, 1,000 hooks, 700 and more held dogfish, which had gorged either the baits, or other fish that had previously taken them.

Not always is the line left down all night. The Folkestone liners, for instance, fish only during the day, and I have been off Dungeness with them more than once, leaving the harbour at four in the morning, and back in time for dinner that evening, having shot and hauled a couple of miles of line with 4,000 hooks. The skill with which the crew of four get out the baited hooks from a series of tubs, until the whole is stretched taut between sunken anchors and dancing buoys, is extraordinary. When all is out, the boat "jills" around for an hour or two until tide and wind suit, and then the line is taken in on the port side, the blanks many, the prizes few. Anemones, five-

for their wives, daughters, or sisters to bait up as soon as they get ashore. Time was when these men did a brisk trade with the Paris markets, their catch going across in the daily steam packet; but this is a traffic of the past, killed by French imports, much as Italian imports threaten to kill the pilchard trade between Genoa and Cornwall.

On all the coasts of Britain, however, nowhere is the small hooker more conspicuous than on the coast of Scotland, extending south to embrace the Border county. Hereabouts, the small handliner is more in evidence than those who combine with longlines, and this is characteristic of the poverty of these inshore fisheries. Their deadliest enemy is the trawler. As a matter of fact, the trawler is accorded summary banishment from many of the Scotch bays, for the simple reason that the small hook-and-line fishermen have generally had a solid representation at Westminster, and can make their grievances felt with excellent, practical results. Still, not even the suppression of trawling brings them very golden prospects. Sometimes it is a scarcity of mussel, or other bait; more often a scarcity of fish in the littoral waters, where alone they ply their trade. Beside the wholesale ingathering of the trawl—which, compared



W. Thomas.

RUNNING HOME.

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with the feeble efforts of the hooker, suggests the Leadenhall bags made by the punt-gun beside the odd brace of teal or mallard shot when out flitting—the line, used either way, but especially in the hand, is a poor method of harvesting. It is an open question, and an interesting one for discussion, whether the fish taken by hook or by net are in the better condition for eating. On the one hand, it may be argued that the net sweeps everything up in its embrace, the sick with the healthy, whereas a fish that takes a bait must, in a sense, be in good condition. Yet this argument may be pushed a little further, to show that the lean and hungry fish which ravenously seizes a bait may not itself be worth eating.

The longlines used on some coasts are costly apparatus, and may, when bait is scarce and obtainable only by rail from long distances, cost as much as £10 to bait 5,000 hooks, while the certainty of adequate return on this outlay is always nebulous. There is off Scarborough a regular hock-fishery for soles, in which longlines are left out overnight. The largest of all flat fish, the halibut, is taken by handlines, but for this purpose elaborate steam craft are despatched as far as Iceland, in the cold waters of which that great fish reaches its highest development. F. G. AFLALO.

GENTIAN AND PIGS.

TODAY I set forth a solitary pilgrim in quest of Beauty, and found it everywhere, for spring in the Tyrol makes the most prosaic person feel a poet. However determined to keep to the valley, sooner or later one has to climb, and after a stiff ascent through a pine wood I found myself in the open on the brow of a hill. Above was a cloudless blue sky, which seemed reflected in the marshy ground round my feet, for the grass was studded thickly with the Bavarian gentian, ultramarine stars with white eyes. Finding a dry place, I sat down and gazed upon water gleaming in the valley, and green woods half encircling the hill, while in the distance I saw the range of rugged mountains akin to the Dolomites. Then, being in a sufficiently dreamy state of mind, I drew out pencil and paper and wrote down "Gentians." Something pushed against my knee; it was a small pig, and following in his wake came ten other piglings, until I was surrounded. Regardless of my shooing, they sniffed up and down me with their snouts; evidently the little

cannibals connected a paper on a resting wayfarer's lap with sausage. It is difficult to write before an audience of pigs, so I looked about to see if I could drive them back to the place from whence they had come. Some way down the side of the hill there was a farm; the balcony of the long wooden building was hung with red, white, and blue drapery, not banners for any gala day, but the household washing drying in the sun. However, no one was working outside, for it was eleven o'clock, the universal dinner hour. I decided it was too hot to move, and waited patiently for the proper owner to look after the runaways. It seemed to me that I had been scratching friendly backs with a pencil for a long time, when a figure like a Chinaman's came out from the farm and began calling in a soft musical woman's voice to the pigs.

When working in the fields the young peasant women about here wear their hair in pigtails under a hat with a turned-down brim, and blouse, knickerbockers, apron, and home-knitted stockings all of the same shade of blue. At the woman's first cry the piglings ran to meet her, then turned tail and came frisking back to me. Her words were wafted up the hill, meaning "Treasure," "Joy of my life," "Little sweetheart." Only the deaf or a pig could have withstood that coaxing voice. Except once, when an elephant pretended to be going to sit on a seat already occupied with people, I have never seen anything so roguish as the expression in those small pigs' eyes, as the woman toiled after them up the hot hillside. But at last she stopped, indignantly crying out "Very well, then, little ungratefuls, stay with the stranger if you will," and she turned back to the farm. Then helter-skelter the pigs hastened after her, mayhap moved by remorse, but more probably they had caught sight of the bowl of food she carried in her hand. Now I can write about gentians, thought I; but I could not, for pigs are obtrusive things (in England long before they are seen), and my thoughts were filled with them. I compared the life of these clean, merry little animals with the wretched existence of those pent up in a sty amidst horrible surroundings. The miserable pig has not even the strange comfort of thinking like an old woman I know. "But there, my dear, when Mrs. C. comes riding up in her kerridge, and thinks, by giving me a little soup or jelly what she don't want herself, that she has the right to find fault with my little 'ome, all the time I keep from answering back, for in a few years we shall both be dead; then it will be I that rides in a kerridge and she that tramps in the dirt."

Alas! clean pigs and dirty pigs have the same sad ending; but if pigs have no hereafter, it really does not seem fair that their lot in this life should be so unequal. There is need for a pigs' champion. Again I try to write about gentians. Being all of one vivid hue, they have no expression, and that is why after first greeting them with rapture one soon tires of them; now pigs—— W. S.



W. Thomas.

A CRITIC OF THE CATCH.

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"**H**OW could I help writing romances when I had walked, trembling at my own footsteps, through that long gallery, with its ghostly portraits, mused in those tapestry chambers, and peeped with bristling hair into the shadowy abysses of Hell-hole." When Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton—the first Lord Lytton—wrote these words he was thinking of the Knebworth of his childhood—a gloomy, rambling old house of great antiquity, with secret passages and haunted rooms. It was built in the shape of a large quadrangle enclosing a central courtyard, but the architecture was varied, and belonged to many different periods. The east front was traditionally said to have existed as far back as the reign of Edward III., though its façade had been altered long after that date. The side to the north was occupied by a long gallery built over a colonnade which formed one side of the courtyard; that to the south by a great range of offices and dormitories. The fourth side, which faced the west, still remains; it is said to have been built during the reign of Henry VII. by Sir Robert de Lytton, who at that time held the offices of Treasurer of the Household and Keeper of the Great Wardrobe.

In the time of Sir Rowland Lytton the house was honoured

by a visit from Queen Elizabeth, and the bedroom in which she is said to have slept still survives in the present house. His son, Sir William Lytton, was member for the county in the time of Charles I., and received a visit from Hampden, Eliot, and Pym, who came to consult him on the measures to be taken at the beginning of the Long Parliament. He was one of the Commissioners sent to treat with King Charles at Ox'ord, but he afterwards resisted the usurpation of Cromwell, and was imprisoned by the Protector in the prison known as "Hell-hole." From a recollection of this incident he afterwards gave the same name to the underground room in his own house. In 1812 the greater part of the old house, with its associations, its memories, and its mysteries, was demolished. The cloistered courtyard, the long gallery, the haunted rooms, and the gruesome "Hell-hole," all were swept away. Even the remembrance of the old building has passed from the neighbourhood, and the only indications of its original shape and size are to be found in the brown stains on the grass, which, in very dry seasons, still mark the outlines of the old foundations. This work of destruction was carried out by Mrs. Bulwer, the mother of Sir Edward, who found herself without the means to maintain





SOUTH-WEST FACADE.

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GARDEN OF HORACE: THE POET'S RETREAT.

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WALKS ON THE SOUTH LAWN.

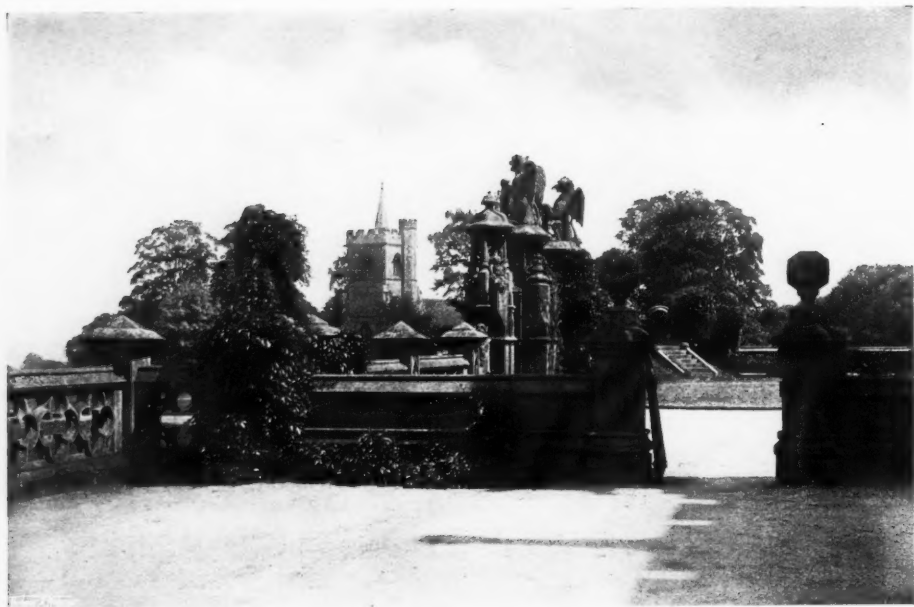
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THE WINTER GARDEN.

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so large and costly an establishment. It is difficult for posterity to contemplate with anything but the keenest feelings of reproach so wanton an act as the demolition of an old home which had remained for centuries in the hands of the same family, and to which the traditions of the past still clung as tenaciously as the lichen to its walls. But some allowance must be made for the circumstances in which Mrs. Bulwer found herself. The revenues of the family had been seriously diminished during the lifetime of her father, Mr. Richard Warburton Lytton, who was one of the most eminent scholars of his day, but whose capacity for learning was not equalled by his capacity for business. During the lifetime of this student money was profusely spent in the formation of a large library to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, and in providing amusements for the whims and extravagances of his frivolous wife. To these ends even the family plate was sacrificed, and at his death the books which he had collected had to be sold to pay his debts. When, therefore, Mrs. Bulwer inherited the property, she found a great part of the house almost in ruins, and unsuited to modern requirements. The order accordingly went forth for the work of destruction to begin. At this time the future novelist was living with his mother in the manor house at Knebworth, and the romantic tendency which he afterwards developed in his writing may be attributed in large measure, as the words quoted at the head of this article indicate, to the impression made upon his youthful fancy by the sombre associations of the old home. To the same source may be traced the fantastic architectural embellishments with which he afterwards adorned the remaining portion of the house, when he succeeded on the death of his mother. The Knebworth of to-day is the western side of the old quadrangle, but in its outward appearance it bears no trace of its Tudor origin. The room, indeed, is there in which Queen Elizabeth slept; that, too, in which the leaders of the Long Parliament conferred. Much that belongs to an ancient date still lingers about the house, but the decoration in general, whether external or internal, is a monument of the taste and character of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

These preliminary remarks were necessary to explain how a house which was built in the reign of Henry VII. came to bear so markedly the seal of the early nineteenth century—that age of unreality in which a brick house seems to have been thought unworthy of a country gentleman, and cement and stucco were widely resorted to in order to convert in the most literal sense the Englishman's house into his castle. Seen from a distance the Knebworth house of to-day has the appearance of a Gothic building, with a battlemented roof and a cluster of tall spires. Its eight slender towers are each surmounted by a small copper dome, which time and weather have worn to a rich blue-green colour. On the top of the domes are gilded vanes, and on a sunny day the glint of their gold, together with the green verdigris of the copper, gives an appearance of great brilliance and gaiety. In the centre of the house rises a square flagstaff tower, probably designed by Sir Edward to



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NORTH-EAST FRONT.

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THE BROAD WALK.

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THE GATE-HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

recall the "lofty watch-turret" which, in the days of his childhood, stood over the gateway of the eastern and most ancient part of the original building. On closer inspection the house is seen to be further adorned—if such a word may be used—by griffins and gargoyles of quaint Gothic design, and by the sculptured armorial bearings of different branches of the family. The large iron gates which open on to the park are dominated by two fierce winged monsters in the same style. Facing these gates, and at right angles to the north front, is a water tower, which was built comparatively recently by the late Earl of Lytton, and feeds a reservoir from which the whole estate is supplied with water. In building this tower, Lord Lytton, like his father before him, wished to recall some features of the old house. It was his intention to complete in the pseudo-Gothic style of the present building two new wings, which would thus make, with the existing wing, three sides of a quadrangle. The long wall, with the water tower and archway, was to form one side, and the other was to be occupied by a museum for the Indian curiosities collected by him during the period of his Viceroyalty, and a large library for the books, which had far outgrown the limits of the room assigned to them by his father. This project was never completed. The water tower itself proved a very costly undertaking, and the books and the Indian collection have remained unprovided for.

The house to which Sir Edward succeeded on the death of his mother stood in the park with practically nothing but a few trees to set it off. The large gardens, therefore, by which it is now surrounded, like the decorations of the house itself, are entirely the creations of his fertile imagination. From the south terrace there stretches a wide Italian garden, with straight gravel paths, formal flower-beds, classic urns, statuary, and fountains. In a corner, at the far end of the upper terrace, is a little spot set apart as a dogs' burial-

place. Here the late Earl of Lytton has preserved the memory of a favourite Japanese spaniel by this simple inscription: "Here lies the great heart of a little dog, Budget." In other parts of the grounds are bowling alleys, tennis lawns, shrubberies, and a maze, besides the usual contents of a well-kept flower garden. But perhaps the most interesting feature is a quiet, secluded corner screened off from the rest of the grounds by tall yew hedges, and dedicated to the memory of Horace. In the centre of this miniature garden is a small pond surrounded by oak trees, whose branches hang over to the water's edge. At the end of a grass walk stands a bust of Horace, whilst similar busts of Mæcenas, Augustus, and other of his friends are arrayed along the yew hedge by which the garden is enclosed. Little statues of the Muses and Italian vases of classic design are placed here and there in yew niches, and such flowers only as are mentioned in the classics are allowed to grow within its bounds. The thick trees provide a complete shade throughout the long summer days, and a sense of profound peace and seclusion pervades the spot. This Horace Garden was Sir Edward's favourite haunt. He would often steal away from the bustle and distractions of his busy life to seek inspiration in this much-loved place. For many years this part of the grounds has been sadly neglected; no loving hand has tended and cared for it, time has worked havoc with its little vases and statues, the ivy has grown at random over its banks, and weeds never mentioned in the classics have intruded themselves unbidden and unchecked. But neither time nor neglect can rob it of its associations. Here, more than anywhere else, still lives the memory of the man who made it and loved it; the man who studied Horace and translated his works, and who in the garden dedicated to his memory first conceived and planned out many of those romances with which he delighted his generation.

LYTTON.

IN THE GARDEN.

CHIONODOXA (GLORY OF THE SNOW) IN GRASS.

WE were surprised and delighted when revisiting the garden to find little clouds of blue in the grass.

Looking from the window we were puzzled to know the name of the plant, having forgotten that two years ago groups of the bulbs were arranged there. The first year the bulbs failed to flower, but, evidently, they were reserving their strength for this year's effort. It is to be hoped that they will become permanently established, for few of spring's flowers are daintier than the blue Glory of the Snow, the *Chionodoxa Luciliae*, which will even sow itself in some soils, and prove almost a weed, if one may so describe this blue and white cheery flower, which opens wide to the sun. Many bulbs are quite at home in grass land, and those that seem most unlikely to succeed away from the border or rock garden. We were unaware that the *Chionodoxa*, for instance, would flower in grass, but this spring has conveyed an agreeable lesson. We hope to plant several hundreds next autumn, after this year's pleasant experience. Only *C. Luciliae* has been planted, and this is probably the most suitable for grass, as it is stronger than the others, but lovers of the *Chionodoxa* will not be content with only this. *C. sardensis* and *C. grandiflora*, or *gigantea*, as it is also called, are very beautiful also. The flower-stems are only a few inches high in each case, and the whole aspect of the bulb suggests one of the early-blooming *Scillas*.

A NOTE ON WALLFLOWERS.

A reader of these notes sends the following interesting communication about Wallflowers: "There are some beautiful sorts of Wallflowers now, and they come fairly true from seed. To obtain strong plants that will flower freely the seeds should be sown in May, and the seedlings transplanted, when large enough, 6in. apart. They do not require very rich, loose ground, as they make more fibrous roots and move much better in rather firm soil. The following are half-a-dozen of the best varieties: Early Feltham, dark red, a favourite market variety; Eastern Queen, bright chamois, changing to salmon red; Primrose Dame, primrose yellow, compact growth; Purple Queen; Vulcan, velvety crimson; and Ruby Gem, rich violet; Early Paris Market is an annual, and if it is sown in the spring it will flower the same summer."

FLOWER-SEEDS TO SOW NOW.

China Asters, especially the beautiful Ostrich Plume varieties we have written of on more than one occasion, and the sweet-scented Stocks may be



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A WILD GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

sown now thinly in a cold frame. The young plants should be set where they are to flower in the month of May. Of the latter, very fragrant and beautiful varieties are Giant Perfection, the Pyramidal, and Victoria Bouquet. The East Lothian and Intermediate Stocks may be included also, and the Brompton, which is a biennial. Seed of it should be sown in July for a display of flowers in spring and early summer. There is a cold frame in most gardens, but if such is not the case, sow outdoors early in April in a warm border. The flowers will, of course, appear later, but they will be none the less welcome.

TIGER FLOWERS AND GLADIOLI.

The planting-time of bulbs is usually associated with autumn, but a few of the most beautiful of all must be put in now. They are as follows: The Tiger Flower (*Tigridia*) may be compared to a huge butterfly. The bulbs enjoy a light, well-drained soil, and the sunniest spot in the garden. Plant them 6in. deep, and it is wise to put a little sand in the bottom of the holes for them to rest upon. Lift the bulbs in autumn, and store them during the winter in a dry cellar, or in some place where frost will not affect them. *T. pavonia* is the type, but there are several varieties, such as *grandiflora* and *conchiflora*. The name "tiger" was given in allusion, we presume, to the blotches and stripes of colour. It is not strictly accurate to describe the *Gladiolus* as a bulb, rather as a "corm"; but the two are sufficiently allied to fall under this heading. The list of hybrids and varieties has been greatly

extended of late years; so much so, that it is difficult to choose the best from the bewildering series presented to us. As the planting of Gladoli was described recently, it is unnecessary to refer to it again.

THE EARLY-FLOWERING CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

The writer was astonished last year with the wonderful effect the early-flowering Chrysanthemums are capable of giving when the best varieties are chosen. They are called "early-flowering" for the reason that the buds expand in August, and, according to the variety, a succession is maintained until October. Certainly the raisers of new sorts during recent years have accomplished much, and in place of the washed-out pinks and dingy yellows we were asked to admire formerly, the colours are now strong, decided, and, therefore, effective. The plants we have had experience of were mounds of bloom even after the frosts had destroyed all summer exotics, and, as a guide, we give the names: Harvest Home, the flower a mingling of crimson and gold colours, a beautiful autumn-flowering Chrysanthemum; Mme. Marie Masse, mauve and lilac; Crimson Marie Masse, Mme. Casimir-Perier, soft pink; Mytchett White, Market White, also of the purest white; Notaire Groz, mauve; Ambroise Thomas, bronzy red; Mme. la Comtesse Foucher de Careil, orange red; Ivy Star, orange yellow; Mme. Desgranges, white; and Roi des Precoces, rich crimson. It may appear strange to plant so late, but there is

no question that the month of May is the best time to do this, as sharp frosts seriously affect the young growths. The beds, or wherever the plants are to go, must be well prepared, but not too much enriched with manure, and as growth proceeds stake the plants carefully, tying out the young shoots, to prevent accidents during high winds. There should be a space of 3ft. between the plants, as this allows of full development. This applies to the Japanese varieties, which are those named, but the Pompon varieties require less space, 2½ ft. being quite sufficient. We care less for the Pompon group than for the Japanese, but always have a few plants of the following: Little Bob, chestnut crimson; Yellow l'Ami Conderchet, deep yellow; Alice Butcher, reddish orange; Lyon, rose purple; Mme. Ed. Lefort, orange touched with red; and Mme. Jollivant, flush white. The beautiful deep crimson Jules Lagravere must not be forgotten. It flowers far into November; the colouring is particularly rich, and does not fade to any purplish shade.

PANSY QUEEN OF THE YEAR.

A charming Pansy for planting in the rock garden now is called Queen of the Year. It is a little blue flower, reminding one of a large Violet, and the plant makes quite a mat of growth, almost hidden beneath the mantle of bloom. We planted it last year both in the rock garden and to form a foundation to a bed of Hon. Edith Gifford Rose. It was a happy flower marriage.

THE COMING OF THE LEAVES.

OVER the whole face of the country a faint flush of green is creeping. Along the twigs of the hedgerows, and on the bare branches of the trees that stand silhouetted against the spring sky, the little brown buds are awaking from their winter sleep, and opening to reveal their inner greenness, while down below, out of field and roadside, tender baby leaves are pushing up into the light. For the coming of the leaves is at hand, and the drama of Nature's great annual resurrection is about to be played—a drama in which each actor takes his own part in his own way, and asks for individual recognition of his efforts. So whether the coming of the leaves be out of the brown buds, as in the oak or elm, or directly from the ground, where the root has rested during the winter frosts, as in the primrose and violet, each kind of leaf makes its *début* on the stage of life in a little way of its own, and our interest in the drama of the spring grows as our eyes are opened to the devious methods, schemes, and fancies that the plant actors exercise in their opening moves. Look, for instance, how the violet leaf makes its first appearance, rolled up lengthwise on its face into two twin rolls, which rolls, as the days pass, move apart by degrees until the whole face of the leaf is uncovered and it lies flatly before us. But its associate, the primrose, prefers to roll itself backwards, not forwards, and so in its earliest youth there lie at its back, along the thick midrib, two bales of crumpled green tissue. Under the persuasive influence of the sunshine, these bales lengthen and unwind, and the face of the leaf broadens, until, at length, the unwinding is complete, and the crinkled edges stand stiffly out on the

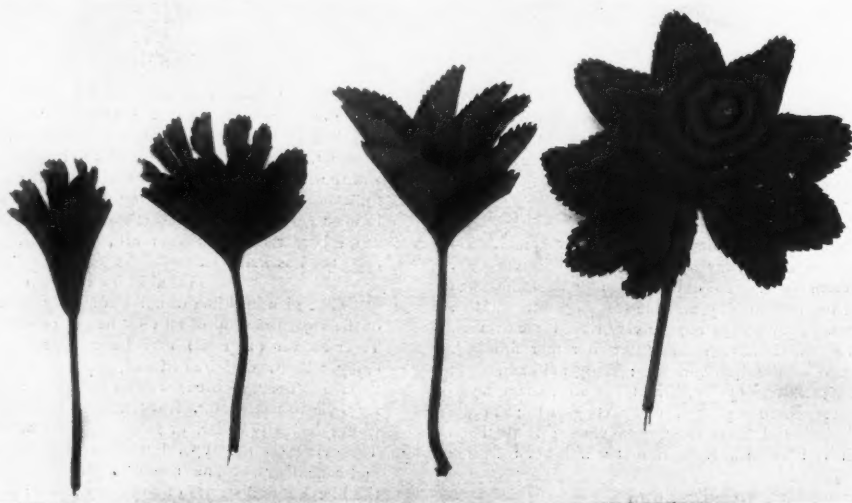


FAN-LIKE PLEATINGS OF BEECH.

not have put away their Sunday cloaks with daintier arrangement. As the leaf grows the folds move apart and throw themselves

back, and presently the lovely scalloped leaf—quite one of the most attractive on our English wild plants—stands before us, palest green in front and silvery white behind.

As we glance with searching eye over the coming of the leaves we see a vast unwrapping of pleats on every hand—pleats of every size. Sometimes they are like the pleatings of a fan, and then the lateral veins act as fan-sticks. Sometimes, as in the cherry, the leaf is merely folded in



LADY'S MANTLE GRADUALLY UNFOLDING.

half, lengthwise, the mid-rib serving as hinge; sometimes, as in the star-like lupin, each leaflet is first folded in half, and then all are drawn together into a bundle. In the compound leaf of the vetch, though there is an appearance of pleating at the outset, yet there is no genuine folding, for the leaflets are merely laid upon one another in pairs, and then drawn together into a small bundle as in the lupin.

The beech buds, shooting out above our heads, are perfect illustrations of the fan method. In the tapering brown bud the leaf-pleats are closely pressed together like a completely closed fan, then, as the buds burst and set free their inmates, Nature, with dignified leisure, spreads them smoothly out to catch the air



THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VETCH LEAF.

But Nature's leaves are not always natty and neat, any more than are all Nature's other children in more highly-developed spheres, and at times the baby leaves make their appearance as rough, crumpled little balls, which need a good deal of smoothing out before the creases disappear, if indeed they ever do. The poppy and the geranium leaves are cases in point, and so, too, are the oak buds, out of which the leaves tumble in a higgledy-piggledy sort of way, justifying their John Bullism by a contempt for delicacy of procedure and finicking wrapping up. But, nevertheless, the oak leaves bear the marks

of their unmethodicalness all their lives, for the irregular outline of their margins is all due to their irregular foldings in the bud.

But as we pursue our enquiries into the ways of the leaves, we find, further, that some are not satisfied with one simple method of pleating, but combine two or more methods together. Thus the roses and the brambles are not only pleated like a fan, but each leaflet is, in addition, folded in half. Yet these complications are chiefly confined to leaves of complicated shapes, with many divisions or leaflets. For elaborateness of method, however, there are few among the plants which can compete with the ferns in their intricate watch-spring-like windings. For though the plain hart's-tongue is simply enough rolled up from apex to base, yet when one gets a fern frond like the bracken, made up of a large number of pinnæ, each of which is in its turn made up of still smaller pinnæ, and every one of these is coiled round like a watch-spring, then, indeed, as the frond grows to maturity, and all its parts are performing their own uncoilings simultaneously, the very attempt to realise the performance leads to a sense of kaleidoscope-like confusion in the imagination.

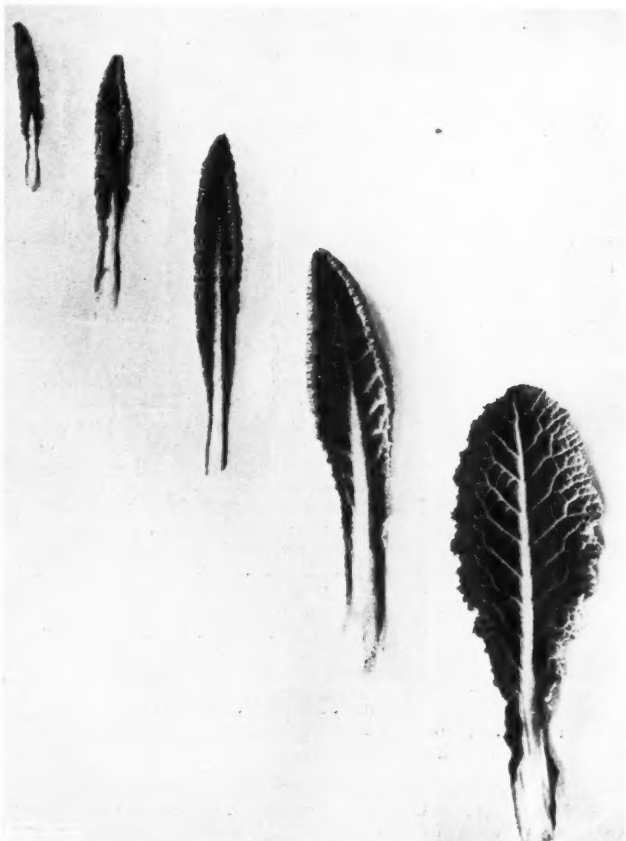
In striking contrast to the roses and the ferns, we sometimes find leaves which are never rolled or folded, or wrapped up in



BURSTING OF A SYCAMORE BUD.

and sunshine. Many other trees also favour the fan-like pleatings for packing their leaves into the buds, though few are as exact as the beech. The horse chestnut, for example, rough-pleats its large leaves within its sticky, glistening buds, while the bursting of a sycamore bud shows some pretty pleatings, as is revealed in the photograph of the various stages in the process. In the ash, though the foldings look quite fan-like as the leaf tips show themselves through the opening bud scales, yet the impression is erroneous, and the illusion is due to the leaflets being folded simply in half and pressed together in tidy rows within the scales.

When we come to ask what is the meaning of all these elaborate pleatings and foldings, we discover that they are just the result of the trees' efforts to stow away to best advantage in autumn their infant leaves till spring warmth comes and they can emerge into the open, for space is so limited within the buds, and there is so much to go into them, that it is necessary to economise rigorously in the matter of room, and so the trees have become good packers in the process of their evolution.



A PRIMROSE LEAF'S GROWTH.

any way whatsoever; they just "come," and our very first sight of them shows them in perfect form, however minute they may be. Thus the youngest ivy leaf in its earliest days has the characteristic ivy shape, and is just the mature leaf in miniature.

Again, as we watch the coming of the leaves we see other phases of leaf-life illustrated. Not always, even among leaves, is it "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost," for in some the protective instinct is strong, and an older leaf shields and protects a younger, as it, in earlier days, was shielded and guarded itself. Thus the tulip looks truly maternal as the stronger, older leaf wraps round a younger one that peeps confidently out from the sheltering embrace. And the funkias in the gardens, and some of the orchids, and many other plants, show the same fostering care. The lilacs, some of the very earliest of the trees to don their summer garb, neither fold nor roll the leaves in the buds, but lay them one over the other so that the older protect the younger, and only gradually lift themselves away from the "nest" as the twig develops. Of course, the outer leaves were themselves shielded through the winter by the dark brown waterproof scales, which kept the frost and damp away.

It is often quite a long time after the lilacs before the beeches, the elms, the limes, the hazels, and other forest trees make any show of foliage; but when they do, a walk through the spinneys and woods, or even along the highways, shows many a pretty sight to "seeing" eyes. Then the lime twigs are garnished with little green hearts that hang in long rows on either side of the branches in the quaintest way, their delicate tissue not yet able to face the direct rays of the sun, and the hazel buds have transformed themselves for the nonce into what look like green and brown moths at a little distance, for the two oldest leaves stretch out like wings on either side, while the rest of the bud and its scales make an admirable imitation of the insect's body. The elm, too, is a positive joy, for the delicate pleatings of its dainty leaves are enhanced by the lovely shell pink of the fast-dropping bud scales. But as the month wears on the lime "hearts" raise themselves, the hazel grouping loses its moth-like form, and the pink elm scales are swept away by the wind, and all tend to fuse in a uniformity of luxuriant foliage. Even those laggards the ashes and oaks have spread their leaves, and are merged in the common greenness, for the advent of the leaves is accomplished and summer is at hand. G. CLARKE NUTTALL.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

IN his new book, *The Angel of Pain* (Heinemann), the author of "Dodo" has once more given us a picture of Society (with a very large S) in our own day, and whatever we may think of the artistry, it is impossible to read what he has written without being led into a train of reflection. There can be no question about Mr. Benson's familiarity with the atmosphere in which he works, yet we feel some doubt as to his ability to put Society in its proper place. But let us define our terms. What is Society? For the present purpose it is a club without a clubhouse. The chief business of the members is to amuse themselves, which they sometimes call discharging social functions. Mostly they are rich and well born, and genius is not wholly excluded, although here Society is often deluded, and has been known to fall down in worship before Bottom the Weaver. Membership is attained by general consent, and the rules of the club are simple, but vigorous. Much toleration is shown for vice, little for folly. Society is seldom more amusing than when it plays at being in earnest. In the very midst of its triviality, its crushes and dinners, its bridge and its deer-stalking, it is suddenly caught by an idea that someone who is probably an outsider dangles before it. Literature, æstheticism, science, spiritualism, religion have all at times been sources of a fashionable idea. In the book before us the idea is that of the Simple Life. Now it would not appear as though a very complicated equipment were required to set forth on this phase of existence. And yet in regard to it Mr. Benson "comes a cropper." The simple life is led by one Tom Merivale, "the dear old Hermit," who has found salvation and seclusion in the wilds of the New Forest. Like Galahad, he is inspired by hopes of a vision, only it is not of the Holy Grail, but of "the great god Pan." Mr. Benson even in this materialistic age endows Merivale with supernatural power. Glasgerion, who could "wile the fish from the saut water," was nothing in comparison. Witness this scene, which is supposed to have taken place in a garden at Pangbourne what time Philomel pipes with his breast against a thorn:

Again there was silence, except for the bubbling of the nightingale. Four notes it sang, four notes of white sound as pure as flame; then it broke into a liquid cascade of melodious water, all transparent, translucent, the apotheosis of song. Then a thrill of ecstasy possessed it, and cadence followed indescribable cadence, as if the unheard voice of all Nature was incarnated. Then quite suddenly the song ceased altogether. . . . Then the air was divided by fluttering wings. Tom held his hand out, and on the forefinger there perched a little brown bird.

"Sing, dear," said he.

The bird threw its head back, for nightingales sing with the open throat. And from close at hand they all three heard the authentic love-song of the nightingale. The unpremeditated rapture poured from it, wings quivering, throat throbbing; the whole little brown body was alert with melody, instinctive, untaught—the melody of happiness, of love made audible. Then tired, it stopped.

"Thank you, dear brother," said Tom. "Go home."

Again a flutter of wings whispered in the air, and his forefinger was untenanted.

There could have been no previous training, first because Merivale was from home, and, secondly, because the nightingale is a migrant. Still more wonderful is his performance with a wild thrush in his own New Forest:

On the lawn some twenty yards off a thrush was scudding about the grass. It had found a snail, and was looking, it appeared, for a suitable altar-stone on which to make those sacrificial rites which it performs with such vigorous gusto. But suddenly, as Merivale looked at it, it paused, even though at that very moment it had discovered on the path below the pergola an anvil

divinely adapted to its purpose. Then, with quick, bird-like motion, it dropped the snail, looked once or twice from side to side, and then half flying, half running, came and perched on the balustrade of the verandah. Then, very gently, Merivale held out his hand, and next moment the bird was perched on it.

"Sing then," he said, as he had said to the nightingale, and from a lurry, trembling throat the bird poured out its liquid store of repeated phrases.

"Thank you, dear," said he when it paused. "Go back to your dinner and eat well."

Now it is only with the wretched music hall animals that have been taught, by a judicious use of hot irons, to please a discerning British public by acting contrary to their natural instincts, that this can ever be achieved without a miracle. It may be safely said that in the music hall and not in the wild wood are these incidents germinated. This is not the simple life of Thoreau, but of Stratford-att-Bow, or rather Leicester Square. But Merivale is a hypnotist, though he sends his patients to sleep in a highly literary and artistic manner.

"Lie down then," said the Hermit, "and look at me—look at my eyes, I mean."

He sat down on the edge of Evelyn's bed, and spoke low and slow.

"The wind is asleep," he said, "it sleeps among the trees of the forest, for the time of sleep has come, and everything sleeps; your love sleeps, too. Lie still," he said, as Evelyn moved; "the trees of the forest sleep, and their leaves sleep, and high in the branches the birds sleep. Everything sleeps; the tired even and the weary sleep, and those who are strong sleep, and those who are weak."

Evelyn's eyelids quivered, shut a moment, then half-opened again.

"The flowers sleep," said Merivale, "and the eyelids of their petals are closed, as your eyelids are closing. Sleep, the black soft wing, has shut over them as the wings of birds shut over their heads. The earth sleeps, the very stones of her sleep; she will not stir till morning, or if she stirs, it will be but to sleep again. The sad and the happy sleep; the very sea sleeps and is hushed, and the tides of the sea are asleep. Sleep, too," he said, slightly raising his voice—"sleep till they wake—sleep till I wake you."

He waited a moment, but Evelyn's eyelids did not even quiver again. Then he blew out the light and left the room.

Then is a scene in which a female worldling, always on the watch to be first "in the movement," comes down to learn from this mystic and dreamer, that the irony of a Fielding or a Thackeray would have immortalised. Small blame to Mr. Benson that he fails to rise to the occasion, here, as always, taking the foibles of Society too seriously. But the crowning incident in Merivale's career is when he beholds the actual god Pan. It must have required some courage on Mr. Benson's part to insert an incident like this at the time when Russia was fighting Japan. But he does it in no half-hearted manner. The black thing is ambiguously described, but there can be no mistake what it is meant for, and it leaves behind "the strange pungent smell" of the goat. It is Merivale's visitation of the angel of pain, and he dies from the shock. We need scarcely make any further comment on this feature of the story. Mr. Benson has missed the essential point that the simple life is no matter of miracle or of necromancy, but a return to primeval emotions, and a realisation of that illimitable love and sympathy which make a harmony out of a world that might otherwise drive us mad with its harsh and cruel discords. We have directed a great deal of attention to this feature that runs through the story, because it is poignant and characteristic. The rest is merely the old novel as it has been written so often before—written, however, with the keynote that pain is the purifying agency of life. The angel in turn visits all the chief characters. The hero is disappointed and rendered



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ON THE DOWNS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

desolate by the destruction of his fairest ambition, and even the heroine is perfected through suffering; but, from an artistic point of view, the blot of the novel is that an accident has to be invented in order to inflict the due meed of punishment on Eve'yn Dundas. He is an artist who glories in colour, and an egoist, always more or less in love with his own handsome face. While out deer-stalking his eyes are destroyed, and his countenance rendered hideous by a ricocheting bullet. One passage, by the by, in which reference is made to pellets, would seem to imply that the deer-stalker has used a shot-gun. A few of the characters, particularly that of Lady Ellington, look as

if they had been knocked together at the beginning of the story with a hammer. Thus they never surprise us with anything they do. Lady Ellington is simply a puppet. These, however, are but minor blemishes on the work. The main one is that Mr. Benson does not get far enough away from Society. He does not recognise, that after all, it is essentially only a small and provincial group of people who, clothed with a little brief authority, play such tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep. They do not know that, far from being the leaders of life, they are on its great sea only the foam flakes tossed for a second above its strong and mighty currents.

ELTHAM PALACE.

ROUND about London one may find on the map many houses, or sites of houses, which were palaces of our sovereigns before their country seats in England narrowed themselves to Windsor Castle and Sandringham, Osborne being the last to be thus abandoned. Greenwich, Kew, Theobalds, Nonsuch, and Hampton Court have each its story of the lives of kings, but few have so long a tale as the old palace of Eltham, so long the home of the ancient royal line. Eltham is so near London that its long streets and fair houses are already threatened with the fate of

land under Edward I. He was of the Vescys of the north, barons in Northumberland and Yorkshire, a grandson of that Eustace, one of the twenty-five barons of the Great Charter, who died with an arrow under his helmet at the siege of Barnard Castle. This John de Vescy, lord of the castle of Alnwick, was in arms as a young baron with Simon de Montfort, and was prisoner after Simon fell at Evesham. When free again he carried home to Alnwick a foot of Earl Simon as a relic, and shod it in silver, for the worship of those to whom Earl Simon was martyr and saint. At his death in 1289 his brother William was his heir, William

de Vescy who, a mere lad, had held Gloucester against his sovereign's host. This William saw his only lawful son dead in his lifetime, and set himself to make an heir of William de Vescy of Kildare, his bastard son, begotten while he was justice and ruler in Ireland. His Yorkshire lands he surrendered to Anthony Bek, the Bishop of Durham, and Patriarch of Jerusalem, and had them back entailed on the young William of Kildare; but Alnwick is said to have been sold by this faithless trustee to the Percys, in whose name, at least, it remains to this day, young William of Kildare having enraged this proud bishop, "the most valiant clerk in the realm," by his frowardness. However this may be, the manor house of Eltham and its lands came to the bishop's hands, and the bishop died here in 1311, having rebuilt the house, which, with its dovecote, deer park, and windmill, passed by his settlement to the Crown after his death. Eltham had already served as a pleasure-house for the Court, Henry III. keeping a Christmas here before the days of the Vescys; but under Edward III. it became a common retiring-place of the King when he would ride out from his capital. Kings brought their brides here, and here their children were born. In 1316 the Lord John of



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GOTHIC BRIDGE LEADING TO PALACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Lewisham and Bromley, of Low Leyton, and many another village. Its name has been forward of late by reason of a vast board school, derelict because one of Eltham's outlying hamlets has refused to become suddenly a teeming township of artisans; but it is not yet tamed to a suburb. The moat of Well Hall, the historic manor house of the Ropers, still runs deep, the chief inn is still beautiful with weather-boarding, and King John's palace may be approached by a road which savours of the edge of a cathedral city remote from industrial prosperity. Between a line of tall lime trees and a row of ancient dwellings we go towards the palace. The broad road we walk was once the outer yard of the King's house, and the old wooden houses on our right the lodgings of the King's Officers of the Household, that at the corner having once sheltered the Lord Chancellor of England. A stone bridge of Gothic arches carries us over grass banks and the narrow waters of what was the palace moat, now drained on three sides and changed into gardens. A house old-fashioned rather than ancient hangs its windows at the water-side beyond the moat, and a second house, to whose construction much of the old palace has gone, joins the hall, which is all that now remains of the house of the kings. Stately in decay, the hall of Eltham takes the eye with its long roof and tall windows.

King John's palace is but a name of village tradition, for King John had no house here. The history of that "Altheam" which Hamon the sheriff held in Domesday Book under Odo of Bayeux, is obscured by the many divisions and under-feeoffments of the original manor; but we know that John de Vescy had this

Eltham, whose noble alabaster effigy may be seen on his tomb at Westminster, was born here, and christened at a font hung with Turkey cloth and cloth of gold. The year after Cressy fight there was held a great tournament in the Eltham tiltyard, and here King Edward III. feasted John of France, his prisoner, with the Kings of Scotland and Cyprus. This was the scene of many of the Christmas feasts of Richard II., in whose lavish days 10,000 had their meat in his Court. Leo, King of Armenia, was his guest here in the palace to which Richard brought his child-queen from France; and, walking by Eltham hall, Froissart from Hainault had speech with an old knight, who told him of many things which are written in the great chronicle book.

York and Lancaster both loved Eltham. Henry V., our comely King, lodged here on his road from Agincourt, with French lords prisoners in his train. Henry VI. was much here, and Edward IV. set himself to rebuild the palace, saying in Skelton's rime:

I made Notingham a place royal,
Wyndsor, Eltham and many others mo,
Yet at the last I went from them al,
Et ecce nunc in pulvere dormio.

This was the King to whom we owe what Eltham can show us to-day: the stonework of the bridge would appear to be his, and his badges mark the hall for his work. Two of his daughters were born in the house which he thus restored.

The Tudors came, and Eltham was still a cherished place.

Henry VII. drew broad pieces from his hoard to beautify the house which he rebuilt at the moat edge, glazing the hall windows with his red roses and portcullises. His son kept Christmas here in bountiful fashion in 1515; and on Twelfth Night a fantastic castle was built on this hall floor, a castle which masquing knights attacked in vain, until the defenders sallied

many rooms and offices, but all out of repair and untenable, the deer destroyed and the park newly disparked. In the time of George IV. the noble house of Eltham was a ruinous barn, with pig-sties built along the palace wall. Fortunately, the love of old houses was awakening, and the roof was given a rough framework of timber to stay it from falling inward, and in



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HAMMER-BEAM ROOF: KING JOHN'S PALACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

out with dames in strange rich dresses and danced before the King. But Greenwich was already rising a rival to Eltham. James I. was the last king to lodge himself for a while in the old house, the parks being full of the deer he loved, and Charles I. came here but as a curious visitor. The Parliament's surveyors of 1649 saw Eltham as a house of brick, stone, and timber, with a fair chapel and a great hall garnished with wainscot, with

later days more enlightened hands have done more to save for us this fair hall. More than rooft. long, the hall is still spanned by its great timber roof—a hammer-beam roof with pendants and curved braces. The dais at the upper end has been destroyed, and all within is desolated, but without, the stone corbels and mouldings, the windows with their mullions and transoms, make a brave show. The bay windows, one of which may be seen in our

picture, have groined vaultings, whose tracery has carved horses at each crossing of the mouldings. In the spandrels of the doorway the royal builder's rose and sun can still be traced, and above on the south bay is the badge of the falcon and fetterlock, with more suns and roses.

FROM THE FARMS.

IRISH MIGRATORY LABOUR.

A VERY interesting Grey Book has been issued by the Irish Department of Agriculture giving a report relating to Irish migratory agricultural labourers in the year 1905. The subject is extremely interesting as illustrating the very great changes caused by the introduction of so many labour-saving appliances into English husbandry. There are many who must still remember the time when English grain was cut almost entirely by hand. The farmers then had to depend upon the roving bands of Irish labourers who came over at the beginning of the season. They were very undesirable people to have about a farm-place, because cleanliness was not one of the virtues cultivated in their native land. They slept in barns and outhouses, worked for about 21s. a week, and at the end of the month for which they were usually engaged indulged in such fights as are usually associated with the name of Donnybrook Fair. It was by no means unusual for them to use not only blackthorns but sickles in those encounters, and a glad day it was to the quiet country-folk when the Irishmen took their departure. It seemed that the introduction of machinery had very nearly ended their day, and the fact was not much regretted because wandering gangs of agricultural labourers had ill associations connected with them. There was a time when Highlanders used to descend in their hosts to reap the Southerners' grain, and at one period agricultural gangs used to be common in East Anglia. The adoption of machinery put an end to a great deal of this kind of labour, yet in the eighties and early nineties the demand for it grew, because at that period the rural exodus was in great force. But the depression of trade in towns has of late years caused a large proportion of the floating labour to go back to the country, and for some seasons past there has been a gradual decrease in the number of Irishmen coming to this country. Last year the falling off amounted to over 2,000 as compared with the year 1904. The most curious fact enshrined in this Grey Book is that many of the migratory labourers are themselves landholders in Ireland. Of those from Connaught last year 2,599, or 23 per cent., were landowners, so were 14 per cent. of those who came from Ulster. The holdings in the majority of cases are described as not exceeding five acres, but there are cases in which those who own over 100 acres came over to work in England. They are divided into three classes—those employed by potato merchants and farmers in Scotland, the Donegal men who go to Scotland and Northumberland as harvesters, and the Connaught men, who make Cheshire, Lancashire, Durham, Yorkshire, Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Warwick, and Stafford the goals of their visit. Those who come over are described as being mostly old men or lads. No doubt these people meet a demand for extra labour on the farm. It is all very well to use machinery, but there are seasons in which human hands and

fingers alone are of avail. We cannot say that there is any reason for regretting the gradual diminution of the importation of farm servants from Ireland. The natural and proper manner in which the demand for extra labour ought to be supplied is from the cottages of small holders. That there may be a surplus of workers is the principal reason for advocating this form of occupation. How much the Irish labourers carry back with them is a matter of estimate pure and simple; but, if we take into account the wages earned, the cost of living, and the expenditure incurred in travelling, it may be reckoned that the migratory Irish labourers carry back to their native island a sum that considerably exceeds a quarter of a million pounds. We by no means grudge it to them. And yet the reflection is unavoidable that this sum would be of considerable importance if it could be honestly placed in the pockets of the inhabitants of English villages.

THE FIRST QUARTER.

Reviewing the weather of the past months, February proved to be wet and tempestuous, and it was followed by such a March as has seldom been recorded before. Lady Day approximated in character to the old-fashioned Christmas of tradition. The wind blew a hurricane, snow fell in great flakes, and the temperature was so low that ponds were completely frozen over. The rest of the days were not unlike this, with the consequence that the usual operations have been retarded far beyond their ordinary time. Sowing especially has been so long kept back that the season is bound to be a late one, while the springing of the young grass and herbage has been effectually checked. The prolongation of bad weather has also had the result of nearly exhausting the farmer's supply of food for his live stock, and every day now he is becoming more dependent on the coming of the first spring grass.

SHOOTING.

IN PRAISE OF THE MONGOLIANS.

THERE is no more conservative class in the country than that composed of sportsmen and keepers; therefore, if they take up any new thing and are pleased with it, it may be assumed that it possesses remarkable qualities. They have to be remarkable to break through the crust of prejudice. Doubtless we have come to a difficult point in pheasant-breeding history. The diseases attendant on overcrowding have been severe; the trouble in getting pheasants to rise well enough to give sport to guns whose ideals of sport are constantly improving, is a further difficulty. There seems very strong reason for hope that the introduction of Mongolian pheasants, pure or, more probably, half-bred, will go far to solve part at least of the difficulty. The admirable photographs that are reproduced herewith were taken at the Mongolian Pheasantry, as it is called, owned and managed by Mr. C. E. M. Russell, F.Z.S., M.R.A.C., and Associate of the Game Egg Guild; and it may be pointed out that the pictures may be very valuable for reference, because some unscrupulous dealers have in many instances sold and offered for sale, as pure or half-bred Mongolians, birds that were not truly to be so described. It is a singular thing that in the fine case of hybrid pheasants at the Natural History Museum they have no specimens of these



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A PEN OF PURE MONGOLIAN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



PURE MONGOLIAN HEN.

breeding season, it shows the horns just starting, and of all the photographs, indifferently, it may not be improper for the writer of the text to observe that they are admirable works of art of their kind, and considering that they are taken from what are really wild birds, must have, and in fact did, cost the artist an immense deal of trouble and patience.

We have insisted before, in describing the Mongolian birds and their crosses at Mr. Rowland Ward's shoot at Necton, and at other places, on their superiority to other kinds, perhaps in every respect that the shooter has to consider, and fuller experience only confirms the opinion. The points of superiority which justify the assertion that the half-bred Mongolian has, as has been claimed for him, "proved himself the best bird which has ever been put into the coverts," are comprised in the following table:

1. He is as easy to rear as a chicken, and has resisted epidemic disease which in two days destroyed many hundreds of common birds in the same rearing field, but not one of

Mongolian crosses. The crosses are rather new, but the museum should be up-to-date. For the rest, the pictures explain themselves sufficiently. Attention may be drawn to the light iris of the eye in the pure Mongolians, and in less degree in the half-bred birds. A very distinguishing feature of the pure Mongolian cock is the broad white collar, not quite joining in front. Of the photograph of the cock of the common kind, it may be noted that, being taken just at the beginning of the

report it is No. 3—the claim that the Mongolian is less of a strayer than the other kinds—and in making this exception we do not wish to imply that we have heard any contradiction of it. It only so happens that we have not received evidence in its positive support. For the rest, we know the whole statement to be corroborated. The first point—this bird's relative immunity from disease—is a most important one in view of our "present discontents," and it has been proved—though probably it



HALF-BRED HEN.

would not be wise to seek too many repetitions of the proof—that these birds can be reared two years running on the same ground without suffering any harm at all. These Mongolians are perfectly fertile with the common pheasants, Chinese, versicolor, Prince of Wales's, and so on, apparently in all their crosses, so that an infusion of their blood into an existing stock would permeate all the stock indifferently, with results that could hardly fail to be good. Mr. Russell, a retired official of the Indian Forests Department, is, it need scarcely be said, an enthusiast for the Mongolians, and his is an enthusiasm based on experience of the bird as he has found it. He had no *parti pris*. He has many letters confirming his views of the bird's capabilities, and especially testifying to its disease-resisting powers. For instance, there is the following from Major Dering (Scots Guards), writing from the neighbourhood of Ashford in Kent: "With reference to the half-bred Mongolian pheasants reared from the eggs I bought from you, I am very pleased to be



PURE MONGOLIAN COCK.

the half-bred Mongolians.

2. He is a free riser, and a higher and faster flier

3. He is a non-strayer, as compared with other pheasants.

4. He is a bird of extremely peaceable disposition.

5. He is a larger bird, and more beautiful in plumage.

6. He is of far superior flavour as a table bird.

7. He grows feathers far more rapidly than the common pheasant chicks.

If there is any one point in this statement which we have not found to be absolutely corroborated by independent experience and

able to write and give you a splendid report about them all round. First of all, when hatched out they started well, and simply grew away from the other birds hatched from the home-bred eggs. . . . As far as flying is concerned, I can give you no very good information, as I was so struck with the young birds, that soon after they were put out into the woods I had the whole lot caught up and put into the pens for next season's breeding. . . . As far as the table is concerned, they are



COMMON COCK.



HALF-BRED COCK.

very good to eat, but the thing about them is the way they thrive at the time when the other small birds die off from various causes." This was in Kent. Mr. Forbes-Gordon writes from Aberdeenshire, after commenting on the good percentage of chicks obtained from eggs of the half-bred kind, "My keeper said they were as easy to rear as chickens." So this is evidence to the constitution of the birds from very different climates. In both they proved an unqualified success. In another letter of



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HALF-BRED MONGOLIAN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

later date Mr. Forbes-Gordon writes: "I had my shoot last week, and am glad to say that the Mongolians were a success, flying very well, and being very heavy birds. Several of the cocks were 4lb., which is a great weight for a bird of this year" (Mr. Forbes-Gordon was writing this on November 7th). "I also think they are much better table birds than the ordinary pheasant." Mr. F. Stobart writes to the like effect: "We shot the coverts at Marske last Monday, and got 445 pheasants. The birds come very high there, higher than I have seen at any other shoot, and everyone was delighted with the half-bred Mongolians. They were three weeks younger than the other birds, and were bigger and flew well. I weighed six young cocks, and they were 18½lb. I also find that they stray less than other birds, and are certainly better eating. They are also extremely hardy."

It is, of course, very tiresome to go on with a record of monotonous praise, but this, which is, after all, the most pleasing form of monotony, prevails in the verdict on the Mongolian crosses; and the present moment, when rearers are in difficulties, or see difficulties facing them, in respect to their pheasants, is not one at which to be afraid of boring people by insistence on the merits of a means of helping them out of those difficulties. It almost looks as if we had passed the experimental stages with these Mongolians. We shall be surprised if they have not come to stay, and to extend themselves more generally in coverts all over Great Britain. The only kind of counter-argument to their merits that we ever hear is the "Oh! I like the old-fashioned bird best. I don't believe in your new-fangled notions." The only wonder is that where the new birds have been tried we have not heard more of this species of logic, and the fact that we have heard so little is the more testimony to their quality.

THE GROUSE AND THE HEATHER.

WITH respect to the hopes of sport in the autumn, our correspondent from the South-West of Scotland further writes: "As regards prospects for the coming season, it is, of course, too early to speak yet. The weather in the nesting and hatching season is the all-important factor as regards the birds. With the open winter we have had, they have been under no difficulties for finding food. The heather supply should have been clean and fresh, and the grouse should have done well on it. The recent snow-storms and rough weather have rather driven them back into packs at a time when one would have wished to see them all paired. Black-game have recently proved themselves to be a

new source of danger to young plantations. And in one case we have heard of them were nipping off the young shoots of the newly-planted larch to such an extent that it became necessary to employ a man to scare them away. Partridges have paired, and the cock pheasants are sparring over the completion of their harems. We have heard of no wild ducks' nests to date; but the recent cold 'snap' in the weather probably accounts for this. Rabbits are breeding, and some of the first litters are already half grown. At this season of the year the future of our game greatly depends on the destruction of vermin. Last season weasels and stoats were particularly plentiful, and during the winter great numbers have been killed. Carrion crows are probably our worst enemies, and it seems impossible to exterminate them. Rooks, whether individually or as a whole, harry quantities of nests, particularly those of black-game on the grassy hillsides; and in many places the rookeries on this account are now annually bombarded. Hedgehogs are not so numerous as usual, and, taking it all in all, vermin was never under better control. It is satisfactory to note that we still have breeding in our midst such birds as the peregrine falcon, the raven, and the buzzard; and the true sportsman, who must be a bit of a naturalist, is as anxious for their welfare as he is for that of his game. In conclusion, 1905 has been, on the whole, a satisfactory season. We expect as good a one for 1906, and we, of course, hope for a better."

POSSIBILITIES OF THE SUB-TARGET MACHINE.

THE suggestions as to a possible development of the sub-target apparatus, which formed the subject of an interesting letter which appeared in these columns last week, have been referred to the president of the Sub-target Company, and that gentleman informs us as follows: "The matter referred to in the letter to which you have been good enough to call our attention has for a long time engaged the attention of the inventor of the sub-target machine. The idea has been carried out both theoretically and experimentally. A machine has been built, and is found to answer the desired purpose. Owing, however, to the great demand for the sub-target machine as applied to rifles, and its successful application as a means of instruction in rifle-shooting, the time and energies of the company have been hitherto fully occupied in perfecting and manufacturing the apparatus in its present form. It will, in consequence, be some little time before the machine as applied to shot-guns, in the direction indicated by your correspondent, can be offered to the public." We have received further information on the subject, but without going into details we can assure our correspondent that there is every



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A PURE MONGOLIAN COCK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

reason to believe that his anticipations will be fully realised, and that, owing to the ingenious adaptation of the principles embodied in the existing apparatus the shot-gun shooter will receive the same benefit and instruction as are now conveyed to the rifleman by the machine in its present form.

LIMING RIDES TO PREVENT DISEASE.

A correspondent writes to say that he believes a great deal is to be done, which is often left undone, in the way of keeping pheasants free of disease, by liming the rides in the covert where they come to feed. He is himself a rearer of pheasants on a fairly large scale. As he truly says, most

pheasant-rearers lime almost everything else. They lime the ground on which the birds have been hatched and reared, and so on, but on the rides where the birds are fed constantly we see the ground trodden and churned about by their feet like a poultry-yard, and yet we seldom think of liming them. It seems as if it must be contaminated as much as any of the other resorts of the birds. At all events, the hint is well worth noting.

CORRESPONDENCE.

EARL CARRINGTON'S SMALL HOLDINGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—May I draw your attention to a difference in statements concerning Earl Carrington's small holdings, upon which you published an article on the 24th inst. In the latter you stated that 650 acres near Spalding were let by the Minister of Agriculture to 170 tenants, at the average rent annually of 33s. per acre. Yet (as reported in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* of February 6th) Earl Carrington, speaking at a meeting of the Farmers' Club, said that at Spalding he had 650 acres let to 202 tenants at a rent of £1,328 (or about £2 os. 10d. per acre per annum). The difference between the amounts in the two instances is therefore 7s. 10d. per acre; and also the numbers of the tenants disagree. I believe that £2 per acre is not an unknown figure for farms of about 100 acres in the Spalding district; so that, unless this price is also realised in Earl Carrington's "holdings," it is difficult to see their advantage. Neither of the above statements explains whether the figures refer to clear profits after deducting repairs, etc.; but perhaps you can supply your readers with this information?—INQUIRER.

[Originally there were 202 holdings, but they have been consolidated into 178. Earl Carrington lets the land to the South Lincolnshire Small Holdings Association at 33s. an acre, but, as was explained, this body lets the tenant have it for an average of about 40s. an acre. The margin is utilised for meeting the necessary repairs and upkeep of drains, etc.—ED.]

SALMON JUMPING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Replying to the question put by "P. H." in your last issue, I think no single reason for salmon jumping can be given. The *raison d'être* of salmon ascending rivers is spawning. When first they feel the fresh water, be it in the estuary, or when a "fresh" comes down the river, or when the weather is likely to change and thus bring down a "fresh," the sex instinct causes salmon to jump—possibly from exuberance at the prospect of its gratification, perhaps that their presence may be made known and their agility and charms advertised to the single, or if, as may be urged, they are mated on entering the river, that these advantages may be demonstrated to their mates. The other reason I suggest is curiosity. When the river runs low and clear, salmon frequently jump as soon as the fisherman wades in and disturbs the water, or even when he shows himself on the bank; often a second fish jumps when the first has disturbed the water. A fish jumps and "acknowledges" the fly when it has gone over him, and that when the fisherman is just opposite the fish, which stares at him at close quarters—"the sly rascal!" as the gillie said this spring. That these latter kinds of jump are not caused by sex instinct, but by curiosity, is, I think, shown by the fact that I have often, while spinning for pike in January, noticed that kelts jump in the same way, generally some 50yds. below where the bait hits the water. A second kelt frequently jumps below the first. I do not think that this is owing to lice, as the jump occurs so regularly after the bait is thrown that it cannot be mere coincidence.—W. F. C.

SEWAGE FARMS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Referring to your note last week on the pollution of water-cress-beds near the Wandle, the disposal of sewage by utilising it to grow marketable crops is undoubtedly an ideal to be aimed at wherever possible, but to plank down one of these farms in a flat country surrounded by rapidly increasing villages, as has been done near the Wandle, is an outrage on common-sense. There is no prospect of its ever being increased in area; land is too valuable in that neighbourhood, and as dwellings are put up nearer and nearer to it, so much the more will it be felt as a nuisance and a menace to health, while the small amount of sewage it is able to dispose of will be a justification that diminishes with every additional house built. It is just an object-lesson of the hand-to-mouth policy pursued by public bodies in so many localities. I have seen sewage farms all over the country, and they all stink, and should only be allowed where there is not the slightest chance of a town ever being built in their immediate neighbourhood, or of fair rivers suffering contamination.—SUBURBAN.

MOTOR-TRACTION ON CANALS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have been much interested in your references lately to the resurrection and development of our canal systems. Some months ago you referred to the proposed use of motors on a Southern canal in the place of horses. This would seem an excellent idea if one difficulty can be got over. Will the motor-drawn traffic pay if still done at the old pace? If not, and the speed is accelerated, how will the banks stand the increased wash, and would not they have to be lined with stone or cement, thereby largely adding to the cost of up-keep?—W. B.

THE RAINFALL OF THIS COUNTRY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was much interested in your article on our water supply. May I ask if you are not wrong in stating that the total rainfall in the year in England, Scotland, and Wales is from 27,000,000 gallons? Taking the average of Great Britain and the definition of an inch of rain from "Whitaker's Almanack," and the yearly rainfall to be 32in. I calculate the total rainfall is over

30,000,000 gallons. I must apologise for intruding my remarks upon you. The engine which drives these works takes over 1,000,000 gallons of water a year.—ARTHUR KNIGHT, Water Lane Works, Leeds.

[The figures we give are those of Messrs. Forbes and Ashford. Perhaps some other correspondent will check them.—ED.]

MALFORMATION OF PLANE TREES IN HYDE PARK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Will you kindly give me an explanation of the peculiar appearance of many of the plane trees in Hyde Park. The trunks, especially those at the Park Lane end, are unnaturally enlarged, and the characteristic appearance of the bark of the plane tree is quite lost; in fact, the whole tree looks distorted. On a recent visit to London I searched books and enquired of friends in vain for the reason.—E. B. C.

[We may refer our correspondent to the "Correspondence" columns of COUNTRY LIFE for March 7th, 14th, and 21st, 1903, where an illustration of these trees was given, and the whole question very fully discussed.—ED.]

A FLOWER IN FLORENCE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I think that the "Flower in Florence," the name of which is asked for by a correspondent in your issue of March 31st, is *Gladiolus delicatissima*. If potted about September, it will flower in England in a cold greenhouse about March or early April. After flowering, the blossoms should be cut off and water withheld till the leaves turn yellow. The pot should be kept in a dry place till the autumn, and then started by watering. The same pot and soil will "do" for several years, but it is best to scratch in a little fresh rich soil every year without disturbing the bulbs.—(REV.) FRANK TATCHELL, 73, Holland Park, W.

WENTWORTH WOODHOUSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the very interesting article in COUNTRY LIFE of March 31st on Wentworth Woodhouse, the author, whilst describing the Wentworth family and its origin, makes the following statement: "Each throwing out many branches, of which not one remains to-day among the landed families." I think, if he will refer to the pedigree of Wentworth of Woolley Park, he will find that Michael Wentworth, who settled at Woolley in the sixteenth century, was a direct descendant (grandson, I think) of Thomas Wentworth of Wentworth Woodhouse, and, further, that Wentworths have lived at Woolley without a break to the present day. There are, amongst other old deeds and documents at Woolley, the original letters of Thomas, Earl of Stafford, to his cousin George at Woolley. I write on behalf of my mother, Mrs. Wentworth, who is now in possession of the property, and she requests me to say she would be glad, should you find my statement substantiated, if you would correct the statement made in your article.—GUY WENTWORTH WITHERINGTON (MAJOR), Woolley Park, Wakefield.

LITTLE AUK IN KENT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It may interest your readers to learn that a fine specimen of a young "Rotche," or little auk, was picked up on my farm by my bailiff on Monday last in a very exhausted condition. After getting it warm it took food and a swim in a bath, but, I regret to say, died on the morning of the 28th. After it recovered it showed fight with its beak, and chattered, to a certain extent, when excited. I see in "Morris Birds" one was shot at Dover in 1840, and, of course, in other places; but I don't think they are often seen so far south as this, or ten miles inland, as this one was due south of Sheerness, on the high ground at Guildsted in the parish of Stockbury, and about six miles east of Maidstone. My bailiff, Mr. Eason, did all he could to save it, and tells me it quite enjoyed its swim and food on the afternoon of the 27th ult., as he wished me to see it alive; but I did not return home till just too late. I have sent the bird to be set up by Mr. Chalkley of Winchester.—R. G. EDWAL LOCKE.

INSTINCT OR REASON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

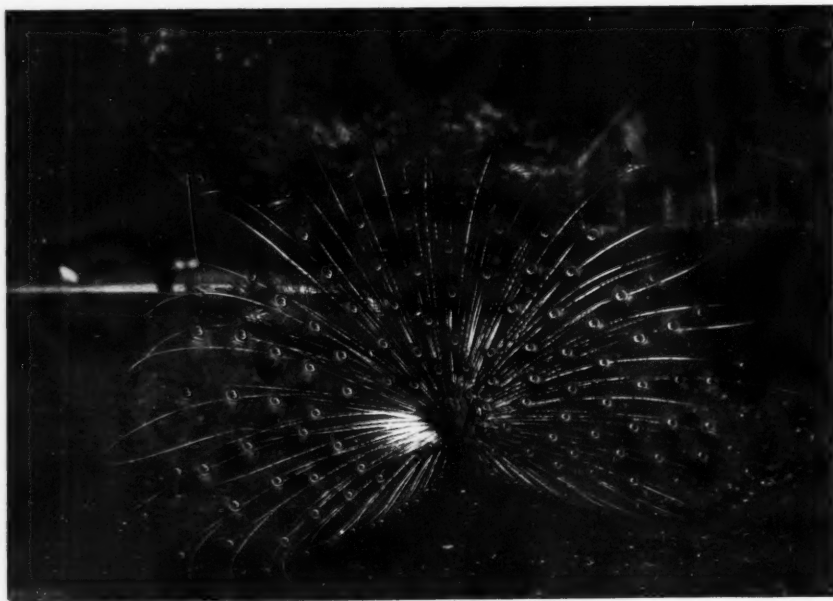
SIR,—Instances of dogs finding their way home after a considerable lapse of time, or across unknown country, similar to that mentioned by Mr. C. de Lacy-Lacy in a recent issue of COUNTRY LIFE, are far from uncommon; but some of them might, perhaps, be taken as illustrating the "homing faculty" in animals quite as much as bearing upon the more subtle question of "reason." I recollect once taking a retriever a distance of about twenty miles by train, to a town where he had never been before, and losing him there. After ineffectual attempts to find him, I returned by rail late the same evening, and was met by my canine friend at the door, he having arrived home some hours before me; his joy at seeing me again palpably demonstrated his fear that it was I who had been lost, and his delight at my having been able to find my way back again without him. On another occasion a hound was left behind in kennel when the pack started early one morning in order to reach a distant meet. Whether we are to suppose that he was aware of the fixture, or how he managed to follow so long afterwards, and at the necessary pace, is unknown; but some three hours after the pack had left he managed to elude the kennelman and to escape, and he not only arrived in time for the meet, but took part in a long run afterwards, and was in at the death. The power of thinking is much more highly developed in some dogs than in others, and the extraordinary degree to which certain individuals attain in understanding the words and actions of their masters is very remarkable. When heavily woolled sheep get over on their backs so as to be unable to right themselves without assistance, they are said by shepherd, to be "lying awkward," and many sheepdogs are trained to raise them by grasping the wool in their mouths and so helping them to regain their feet. I once saw a shepherd win a bet of "an ounce of 'baccy" from a friend by a very clever piece of work by his dog in this way. We were upon a road, and in the next field but one, a good quarter of a mile away in the valley below us, a sheep was seen to be upon her back. The field was called the

"Long Haugh," and the roadside wall effectually prevented the dog from seeing it at all. The shepherd had already been maintaining that his dog understood every word he said, and by way of demonstrating it simply remarked, "Dod, there's that yewe awkward again i' the Lang Hough; Moss will hae te gan an' rise her." The words were not particularly addressed to the dog, but without more ado he jumped up and ran off, went down the whole length of the field in question, found the ewe and set her on her feet, after which he quietly rejoined his master as though nothing out of the common had happened. Another collie was so well trained that he would follow his master about, without paying the slightest attention to a hare, if one happened to rise in their path, so long as the shepherd's crook was carried over his shoulder; but if that was lowered he would not only course, but frequently catch, the hare. Upon one occasion the man had to appear before the squire to answer a charge against his dog by a keeper, but he came off brilliantly victorious by persuading the squire to walk with him through the park, "just to judge for yersell, sor, if Logie wad sae muckle as look at a hare." Needless to say, the stick rested quite naturally all the time over its owner's shoulder, and Logie and his master left the Hall without a stain upon their characters. The writer once owned a fox-terrier that was particularly good at reasoning, and of whom many stories might be related; one, however, must suffice. He was very fond of the gun, and broke himself to find and flush game as well as, or better than, any spaniel, simply from seeing other dogs working in that way. He would also retrieve very tenderly, if the bird happened to fall where it could not be readily reached by his master; if, however, it lay where there was no difficulty in getting to it, he would rarely be persuaded to touch it, saying as plainly as eyes could speak, "All right, you can easily get that yourself." He very rarely lost a running bird; but on one occasion when a partridge had beaten us amongst some turnips, and we were lurching not long afterwards amongst some brake at the edge of the field, the terrier had wandered away a bit by himself, and presently came back, and, giving a little bark to attract attention, looked up in his master's face, with a distinct smile upon his own, as much as to say, "Do just look here a minute!" His meaning not being grasped at once, he gave vent to further yaps, and led on a bit, looking over his shoulder to see if he was being followed, and when at length we got up and went to see what it was, he led us in great glee up to a rock, and lo! there was the partridge just out of reach, squeezed into a hole amongst the stones! But almost endless similar anecdotes might be told. Sir Walter Scott wrote of the dog, "He hath a share of man's intelligence, but no share in man's falsehood," and by no means can he be bribed to do an underhand action. While someone else, in attempting to define the differences between instinct and reason, has said that "a beast, endowed only with the former, is never unreasonable, because for that it requires reason"; and though that may be regarded as too sweeping an assertion, and some people may be inclined to side rather with the lady who replied, "It must have been a beast who said that," yet all must admit that the exact line of demarcation where instinct ends and reason begins is one not very easily drawn.—LICHEN GREY.

LONGEVITY OF HAWKS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Some time ago you published a letter relating to an unusual case of longevity in a hawk. I have come across a still more extraordinary instance of the age to which these birds may attain. In October, 1792, a large hawk (the species is not mentioned) was captured at the Cape of Good Hope and forwarded alive to Mr. John Steward of Portman Square. Round



its neck was a gold collar of curious workmanship, on which was the following inscription: "This goodlie Hawke doth belonge to his most excellent Majestie James King of Englande, A.D. 1610." In a letter from Mr. Steward to a friend, he says that "the Hawke still displayes much vivacity, and the only symptom of age discoverable is a dimness of sight and a change in the colour of the feathers round the neck." It would be of great interest if you, Mr. Editor, would give us some information as to what is known by naturalists

of the age attained by hawks; and perhaps some of your readers may be in possession of facts bearing upon the subject.—H. T.

A NEST IN A UNIQUE POSITION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I think readers of COUNTRY LIFE may be interested in the enclosed photograph of the nest of the long-tailed field-mouse. This spring, as usual,



we have been forcing the rhubarb in our garden by placing seakale pots over the plants and covering close. This year, so far, it has failed, and no rhubarb has rewarded our pains. On examining closely a few days since, all the shoots had been apparently gnawed off close, and in such wholesale fashion that snails or grubs could hardly be the aggressors, and rats were suggested. No remedy seemed of any use. On looking into one of the central pots one day, I saw a round ball of hay, and wondering how it got there, put it aside. A few days later, removing covering and lid of the same pot very quietly, I saw a fresh ball, and a big brown field-mouse gliding away, and looking closer I saw another mouse with pointed nose and bright eyes pushed out from the hay ball, and it too scampered off. I found the ball was a half-finished nest. I photographed it where it stood, and removing it photographed the two nests together, showing the finished and half-finished structures. The soil is scooped a little, and leaves laid as a foundation, the round walls of hay, moss, and a few straws being added. The inner lining is a wonderful mass of softness, apparently sheep's wool gnawed very small, like very fine astrachan fur, and attached together by cobweb or hair. The ground from under each pot to its neighbours was a series of subterranean passages. One can hardly estimate the immense labour of the little creatures in bringing together such a mass of nest material through these narrow passages.—MARTIA.

MICE AND BULBS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The instance recorded by your correspondent, in your issue of March 17th, of a mouse cropping crocuses is, I fear, but too common. Although we have plenty of owls, yet our garden is overrun with mice, shrews, and voles. The shrews, of course, do no harm, but the mice and voles commit great depredations. Not content with spoiling the crocuses, they commenced to ravage a large bed of blue primroses, which are much cherished. All the flowers of one plant were neatly nipped off at the base of the stalks and left in a heap. This could not be permitted to continue, so "break-back" mouse-traps, baited with cheese, were set, and within two days two field-mice and two bank-voles had paid the penalty. A poor little hen chaffinch was also found, in a dazed condition, close to the traps; she had apparently been stunned by a blow on the head from a trap, but had escaped further injury. She soon recovered and flew away. The traps, having done their work, were then removed, for fear that other inquisitive little birds might be caught in them.—I. N.

GABRIEL JUNKS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—To those who have once grown accustomed to see those gorgeous creatures, Junco's sacred birds, trailing their sweeping trains across well-kept lawns, there is something distinctly lacking in a park without a "Peacock Lodge," from where the harsh scream—dear to the soul of the hunting man—comes pleasantly toned down, across the river. Grand barometers they make, though Mr. Jorrocks had a poor opinion of the hen, who, according to him, "hadn't her husband's delicate perception 'bout the weather—follows—never takes a lead." The chicks are not at all bad eating, but a great prejudice exists in some parts of the country against using their feathers as decorations; they are considered unlucky, though how this idea became connected with them I have never been able to find out.—L. T.